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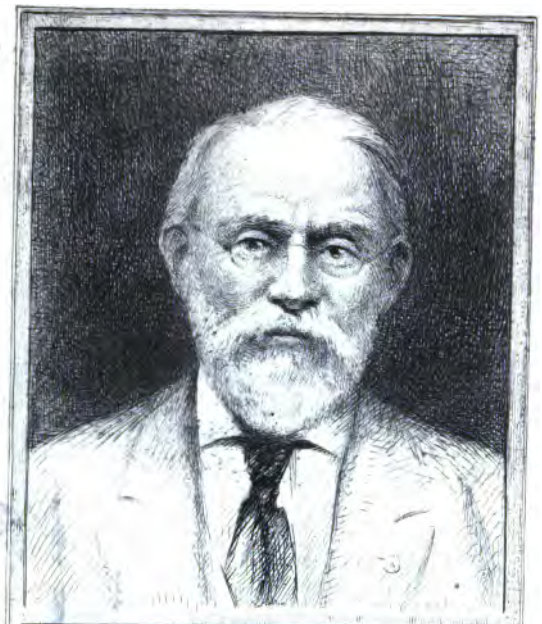

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THE

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PREFACE.

IT is not for me to judge whether the MIRROR which is here offered to the public be worth *looking in* or not; we are all too fond of admiring ourselves in *our own* glasses. Some will perhaps think that it is not sufficiently polished, or that it possesses such magnifying properties as to frighten those who will deign to look in it; others may imagine that it does not faithfully reflect the features that are represented in it. I trust I may be allowed to say that, with all its imperfections, my reader by looking in it will be able to "know himself;" and that the Mirror is sufficiently bright to discover to him those blemishes which before had escaped his notice.

The word "Mirror" must be familiar to many of my readers who have perused the British

Classics; to them, therefore, my usurping so celebrated a name may appear presumptuous: my apology which I offer to the public is, that I have found as much difficulty in *giving* my book a name, as perhaps I shall in *getting* it one. I am not confident enough to expect that this little publication will do any *good*; all I dare hope is, that it will do no *harm*.

THE

MIRROR.

I.

MANY philosophers, in speaking of the world and the whole planetary system, attribute to matter inherent qualities which of itself it does not possess. Matter is substance filling space; it has no principle of self-action or motion; but it is inert, motionless, and always remains stationary unless it is removed or dislodged by a power which it does not inherently possess. Thus, for example, in billiards the ball on the table is stationary, and remains so unless it be struck by a player. Having, then, received an impetus, (which of itself it does not possess) it then has the power of imparting motion: for if it comes in contact with another ball, it immediately imparts that motion which it had first received from the player: consequently motion is an effect, not a cause. If atheists, therefore, attribute the formation of the universe to the fortuitous falling together of atoms, they thereby argue against their own system. For it has been proved, that motion is an effect, not a cause. Now when those atoms or component parts of the universe *fell* together, motion immediately took place: for falling toge-

ther is the act of motion. But it has been proved, that atoms, which are matter, have not the power of self-motion: therefore this falling together, or motion, is an effect of some cause or agent, which agent is God. Therefore, there is a first cause from which motion is derived.

II.

MEN who disbelieve Christianity and who profess themselves Deists are like those, who when they meet with an operation of Nature for which they are unable to account, call it a *lusus naturæ*, from their inability to unravel her mysteries. Deists therefore make the Deity a sort of resting-place where they are obliged to halt, and even grumble because they cannot proceed any further. They believe that there is a God upon no other principle, but because it is an easy manner of accounting for things. They in fact form a God of their own making, not Jehovah. Some Deists will tell you that they believe in God's omnipotence, yet by their reasoning they show that they believe in their hearts that he is bound by certain laws which he cannot alter. They tell you, that they disbelieve a miracle from the *improbability* of such an event taking place; but by their declaration that no human testimony is sufficient to induce them to believe in one, and that the senses from the facility with which they are deceived, are unable to certify one, they clearly show, that in their hearts they disbelieve the *possibility* of such an occurrence.

III.

THE Bible is a book more admired than read: the greatest critics have allowed that its poetry equals that of any of the heathen poets, and that its histories are better authenticated and more interesting than any other: its prophecies are most wonderful, weighty, and important; it contains that which *ought* to excite an interest in every individual. It holds out promises which we profess to believe will be performed—advice, which it is our advantage to follow,—happiness, which it tells us how to obtain, and which we are all busied in seeking; it informs us of the real value of all things temporal and eternal; and it assures us that those things, which we esteem least, are of the utmost value and importance—that we are heirs of God's kingdom and glory—that the price has been paid for it ages ago, and that the perfect obedience which it required of us has been performed by another for every one of us; we have nothing to offer—it simply demands a repentant faith, producing a holy and a virtuous life, and even this faith and power to enable us to live holy, it promises to give; and finally everlasting life. We profess to believe all this; then why not read it? Simply because the Bible is a libel upon the whole human race, which mankind would gladly burn, together with the writers of it, and those who live agreeably to its contents.

IV.

IT does by no means follow, that men who have the strongest evidences come to the clearest

convictions; for there is no set of men more atheistical than comparative anatomists, nor is there any study in which there are stronger evidences of a contriver. Upon the same principle it is by no means certain that miracles will produce conviction. The Jews that saw the miracles of Christ even believed that they were performed by the power of Satan instead of God; which reasoning of the Jews is as absurd as that of the atheist. For both reasonings are contrary to the direct evidence of the senses, and require as little exercise of the understanding to prove the falsity of them. Thus, of those Jews that were present at the miracle of Christ's raising Lazarus from the dead, some believed, others went away disbelieving Christ to be the Messiah. It may be asked what is the cause of this? The infidel answers because the "miracle never took place." But the Christian knows that the external evidence of a miracle, however it may convince the senses, will not convince the heart, unless it be accompanied with an internal operation, unseen indeed to mortal eye, but experienced by every true believer.

There is this conclusion to be drawn from this circumstance. If the miracle of Lazarus being raised from the dead was an imposition, John would not have told us that any disbelieved, but would have rather said that no one doubted. So then this circumstance of the Jews' infidelity, from the candid manner of John's telling the story, should rather strengthen than weaken our faith of Christ being the son of God.

V.

TO *some* unbelievers the punishment denounced against *infidelity* appears too heavy—to *others* the promises for *fidelity* appear too great. What will suit and accommodate the taste of these persons?

VI.

THE world seems to consider Christianity as a large bazaar, where a variety of goods are vendible, all (as they think) equally good, but merely differing according as it best suits the taste, opinions, and fancy of the customers: for men chuse their sect as it best *suits* their *inclinations.*

VII.

TO suppose that a knowledge of the world (as is generally the case) is to be acquired only by living amidst its vices and corruptions, is as absurd as to imagine that a man is a good judge of wine who has only tasted its *dregs.*

VIII.

IF people were afraid of *going to hell* as much as they are of *going to heaven,* there would be more true saints than there are. We are afraid of doing *too* much, of becoming *too* good for this world, *too* sanctified, *too* holy. This, we may be assured, is a very unnecessary *fear.*

IX.

INFIDELS will tell you that it is from *interest* that men are believers. This is most true in one

sense, but not in the way *they* mean it; for what can interest a man more than eternal life? These persons do not reflect that from *their* practice it is as much *their* interest to disbelieve eternal *punishment*, as it is the Christian's interest from *his* to believe in everlasting happiness.

X.

BEING once in a crouded assembly in London, I preferred sitting out a quadrille which was then dancing. The dance being finished, the gentlemen handed their partners to their seats; one of the dancers brought his lady to a chair that was next to mine, and then went in search of the lady to whom he was next engaged. The lady and myself being slightly acquainted, we entered into conversation. After we had settled that the room was extremely hot, the music bad,—but that the room was well lighted up, that there was a strong current of air by the door, and having compared notes at what parties we should most likely meet during the week, and after we had ridiculed and talked a little scandal of almost every person in the room, my attention was suddenly attracted by a lady of an immense scale, sidling along on the arm of a little old gentleman, who were both going to pay their respects to the lady of the house, who received them with all the elegance of a polished gentlewoman. The bow which the little old gentleman made, and the curtesy (attended with the most gracious smile of self-complacency) which was made by the fair dulcinea, were so extremely ludicrous, that laughter was

irresistible. Touching the lady by me with the fan (which she had given me to admire) in order that she should likewise enjoy the laughter, I drew her attention to the objects of my ridicule. She immediately drew herself up from the elegantly careless and negligent posture in which she was sitting, and with evident marks of chagrin and resentment she politely asked me to return her fan, at the same time giving me to understand, that the gentleman and lady were her uncle and aunt, whom she greatly respected, for they had a very *handsome fortune*,—had no children, nor " have they (added she, taking her fan from me) either nephew or niece besides me!"—Those who are fond of ridiculing the natural infirmities of others, will always find that their own relatives and friends come under the same lash, and that by endeavouring to *cut* others, they will *wound* themselves.

XI.

I AM charitable enough to think, that there are more hypocrites in *vice* than hypocrites in *virtue;* the former affect to be guilty of greater *deeds* of *villany* than the latter pretend to have performed *acts of virtue.* Upon reflection, the former are worse than the latter, for they have a contempt for what they possess, and endeavour not to appear what they *are;* while the latter, from their respect to the virtue which they do not possess, endeavour to appear what they are *not.* So great is the depravity of the human heart that men are more anxious to appear *singular* in vice than *eminent* in virtue.

XII.

A man who possesses any singularity of dress or manners, or who is singular in proffligacy, will always find imitators, and is goodnaturedly called by the world "*quite a character.*" A man of piety is also quite a character, but a much more singular one, more *admired*, little *envied*, and much less *imitated.*

XIII.

IT requires more acuteness of intellect, and a more refined taste to discriminate and ascertain the true meaning of words than is generally imagined. Thus, for instance, it would be as great a barbarism to say "the beer is acid," instead of sour, as it would be to call a fine flavoured lemon "a fruit of a sour taste," instead of the epithet *acid. Sourness*, *acidity*, and *bitterness*, are words which are frequently used indiscriminately, but which all imply peculiar and characteristic qualities, which words, perhaps, cannot describe. It is from *this* cause that so many endless disputes have originated. For people often make use of words, the true and essential meaning of which they are totally ignorant of. Men, therefore, should first write down, before they enter into any dispute, *their* meanings and comprehensions of certain terms: this would soon settle the dispute, either from both parties meaning the same thing, though perhaps using very different words, or from the difference of opinion being so small as not worth contending for, or from each party attributing such very different and even opposite

meanings to the same words, as to prevent the possibility of holding any arguments upon the subject in dispute.—People must first agree about *definitions* before they attempt to argue.

XIV.

If Christians took as much pains in inculcating the doctrines of Christ, as infidels do their infidelity, Christianity would encrease much more than it does at present.

XV.

THERE is a set of nominal Christians in the world, who fortunately for them, have imbibed Christianity with their mother's milk, who can give no better answer to the important question, "why are you a Christian?" than the Jew, who being asked by one of them, "Why he still persisted in the faith of Abraham, while every body were Christians?" sneeringly replied; "Upon the same principle that you are a *Christian*, I am a *Jew*, because 'my Fathers were'."

XVI.

THE complaint of our Saviour against the Jews was, that they would not receive him for their Messiah, although they believed and saw his miracles; we wonder at their obstinacy and perverseness in rejecting him, without considering "the beam that is in our own eye;" for we are still more perverse and inconsistent. We believe that he is the Messiah, and in his miracles, and yet disbelieve what *he says*, which is as

absurd as for a man to believe that the king has sent a messenger to him, and yet reject what the messenger says. To disbelieve the *message* is the same as to deny the *messenger*. Christ, the messenger, tells us plainly that "*narrow* is the way that leadeth to salvation, and few enter therein, and that the path that leadeth to destruction is *broad*, and many enter therein." Yet every body thinks he is in the right way—that the majority must be right, (though Christ says to the contrary) and that numbers give security. By this reasoning they literally think and understand that the word "damnation" *must* mean "salvation."

XVII.

IF mankind were to take half as much pains and trouble, and spend half the sums in doing *good* as they do in committing *evil*, the broad road which, as our *Saviour* says, at present leads to hell, *then* would lead to heaven.

XVIII.

BEING once at a concert where there was a fine selection of music and performers, and seeing a lady at the end of the room whom I knew to possess a refined taste and exquisite sensibility, I immediately seated myself next to her in order that between each performance we might compare the different merits of the compositions and performers, and that I might learn from her what was passing in the musical world; I was anxious likewise to obtain some information respecting the drama from her superior taste,

judgment, and feeling, which had induced her to hire a box at one of the principal theatres, in order that she might cultivate her taste to greater advantage.

While the orchestra were tuning their instruments, and the company taking their seats, I was charmed with what feeling and pathos she described the plot of a new tragedy, which had just come out, and which I had not seen. Those scenes in which the passions of love or pity predominated, she described with the most appropriate language of sympathy; she said that the character of the poor beggar woman was so exquisitely drawn to life, that it was impossible for the hardest heart to have refrained from tears, and that she had not yet recovered from the impression which the tragedy had made upon her feelings, and the music she was afraid would be too much for her; for her feelings had that very morning been particularly excited during her walk with her dear little poodle dog, when she met a poor woman with a child at her breast, who in broken sobs of bitter anguish asked charity of her, and who said she, "so reminded me of the beggar woman in the play." "What a mercy," replied I, interrupting her, "that kind providence should have thrown her in the way of so feeling and tender-hearted a woman." "That my heart (continued she with tears in her eyes) was so touched with pity that I instantly"—"Gave her," I eagerly replied—"No," (said she, taking out of her ridicule a bottle of salts) but burst into tears.—"But the woman"—(said I, with a look of

surprise, at the same time unconsciously drawing my chair from her,) "Oh, poor soul, (said she, interrupting me) I had nothing less than a dollar in my pocket, or I would have given her something, for she *really* was an object of charity; and what added *most* to my distress was an awkward sailor, who happened with his great foot to give my poor Fidèle such a kick as to send him home yelping and limping, and I am afraid that the poor little animal will not recover for the next"—"But the sailor, madam,"—"Oh, I had almost forgotten (continued she) my story, for little Fidèle's leg—I quite feel for the poor dog; for animals, you know, sir, are so helpless that it is impossible for any body to help pitying them, except such unfeeling monsters as that sailor, who having hurt poor Fidèle, little dear creature, without taking any notice of my darling, after he had so cruelly treated him, went up to the poor woman, (who by the bye, sir, was extremely dirty, and I am inclined to think was of a certain description of women who are a disgrace to our sex)—'Never mind, Mother,' (said he, giving her at the same time, a seven shilling piece) 'Cheer up, I know from experience what it is to go in want of a crust of bread; but you will find, as I did, that it will all turn out well in the end.' "What the poor woman, sir, said to this I do not know, for I was so impatient to administer to poor Fidèle, that I hurried home. Passing by the corner of the street I happened to turn round, and cast my eyes where I first met the beggar woman; I saw her still standing like a statue and riveted to the spot; she kept first looking at the

sailor then at the money, till he was out of sight; when I got home my poor dog"—the orchestra now struck up, and put an end to the conversation. —Sensibility or feeling is *one* thing, Christian benevolence—*another*.

XIX.

CICERO defines truth to be universal opinion; if this were true, there is scarcely any error that may not be supported from the universality with which it has been received. Thus, for example, it was universally believed that the sun moves round the earth, which is now as universally discredited. How then, it may be asked, is truth to be ascertained? Only by experience. The truth of Christianity itself depends upon this, for it is an experimental truth upon mankind; for if it ceased to *convert*, it would *then* cease *to be*.

XX.

AS the efficacy of a medicine ought only to be judged by its *effects*, so the excellency of a preacher ought only to be judged by his conversion of sinners. If he should fail in *producing this effect*, he may suspect that his *medicine* is not properly mixed, or rightly administered—that he has left out some of the prescription which *he* deemed unnecessary, or that he has *added* something of his own which is not found in the *physician's receipt*, or else perhaps he has *kindly diminished* the quantity from fear, lest, from the delicate constitution of his patients, it should produce too violent an *effect*.

XXI.

Some people think that philosophy consists in denying every thing, and that a man's profundity of intellect is in proportion to his scepticism. An unbelieving blockhead considers himself wiser than Newton, Locke, or Bacon. Wisdom and infidelity to him are synonimous terms. He looks with the most profound and sovereign contempt upon all but those of his own stamp, and prides himself in rejecting that which a child can prove, and every body knows to be true.

XXII.

IF all the writers on morality, both ancient and modern, had foreseen the little *effect* their writings have produced in curbing the passions of mankind, and in giving a different direction to the evil pursuits of a single individual, and had they likewise known the *unintentional* evil they have produced by their readers unconsciously measuring and weighing their own conduct by their *imperfect* standard, instead of the gospel, they would have committed them to the flames, and exulted at seeing the word of God raised upon their perishing ruins.

XXIII.

THE line of Horace, "Spectatum veniunt,—veniunt spectentur ut *ipsæ*," may well be applied to those who frequent plays, operas, balls, &c. and I fear to many who go to church. What a pity this line cannot be applied to those who read their Bibles,

but not with the desire of learning their own characters and corruptions as held out in the Scriptures, in order that they might reform them.

XXIV.

Old G***** is the most perfect misanthrope I ever knew. He is a man whose undertakings have always prospered, and yet he is never satisfied. He has amassed a very handsome fortune, although he was originally nothing but a shop-boy. He has never married, for he has never yet seen any woman good enough for him. If he is in company with a ministerialist, he declares that ministers are too lavish—among the whigs, he declares that from envy, and not from any good to their country, they oppose government. He says *moderate* reformers are too cold, and that *radical* ones are too violent. Whenever he hears of any fresh expences of Government, G***** fears that the taxes will not meet the expenditure, and that the property-tax must inevitably be laid on the country. He has never eat a dinner that was cooked exactly to his liking. He is likewise remarkable for his predictions, which never turn out *true*. Every year he prophecies that the bank of England will stop payment, and that the country will be ruined. His principal study for the last ten years has been to learn how animal life is easiest and quickest destroyed, which he has not yet discovered, from the variety of opinions upon the subject; *when* he has made up his mind upon it, he *then* intends trying the experiment upon himself. Several of his friends were unable to find

out the cause of his melancholy. Some said that *religion* produced it; but the fact is, it arose from the *want of any religion at all.*

XXV.

TO go to church *to* pray is one thing, and *to pray* in it is another.

XXVI.

CLARISSA was a woman of brilliant talents, and elegant accomplishments. Her education, like that of most of her sex, was to strike and gain admiration. Her vanity increased as she grew in years, and as her figure became moulded into the finest form: she was courted by the men, and envied by the women. She was the life and spirit of every party. Her taste was considered as the standard of fashion—her judgment was law. Finding that her beauty principally supported her authority, and that her accomplishments would gain attraction *only* while she was young, she entered into the matrimonial state, and married a man of considerable fortune, whose opinions she thought she would be able to bend to her own. Her frivolity and dissipation were rather increased than diminished upon marriage. She now had a fine family of children, which she found she was incapable, with all her accomplishments, of bringing up. She neglected her children, and by her ridiculous extravagance, disgusted her husband, whom nothing but principle and pity prevented from parting with her. She despised and ridiculed the admonitions of some pious relations,

who endeavoured in vain to bring her to a sense of her duty. Her usual answer to them was, that she did nothing but what *other* people did—that her expenses never *exceeded* her husband's income, and that a governess of the first attainments superintended the care and education of her children, and that she was perfectly satisfied with herself; particularly as she set a good example to her family by going every Sunday to church.

A sickness which arose from an impaired constitution, now seized upon her; disease soon damped her spirits, and showed her the vanity of all her outward accomplishments. She then found that she possessed no resources of alleviating her pain and misery. Her acquaintances sent enquiries about her health, but from fear of *disturbing her*, would not *on any account* call upon her. The contempt she now experienced from an *envious* world aggravated her pains, and was a source of greater misery than all her bodily sufferings. Death was a thing she had *never* once thought of, and a word she had scarcely ever heard. By the consultations of physicians, however, and *the assurances* made by her *family* of her speedy recovery, she had reason to suspect that her dissolution was at hand. She now trembled at that futurity which she felt she could not escape. She at length began to suspect that all was not right. Her countenance became troubled and anxious, as if it had something to ask—something to communicate—but pride had sealed her lips. She soon became more agitated, and unable to controul those thoughts that flashed across her mind. She.

tried to pray—but pray, she could not. The perspiration of death now spread over her haggard countenance. She knew not where to fix her wandering eyes, which bespoke the distresses of her soul—she tried, as it were, to flee from herself—but it was vain. She tossed about restless in her bed, calling upon God and her Saviour—but it was the cry of *barren anguish.* She would suddenly start in her bed, and cry, "Oh! that years were given me for repentance.—Give me a moment's peace in all eternity, for oh God, I cannot pray!" The Sacrament was offered to her, but the sight merely aggravated her horror. "Shall my dying lips," said she, "still profane that which they have so often in an unholy manner received?" Then in a most convulsive agony, striking her forehead, she exclaimed, "Oh God! that I could live—would that I could pray—Clarissa is lost for ever." Her last words were attended with the internal struggle between life and death—and the gay and thoughtless Clarissa was no more.

XXVII.

IF people *prayed,* as often as they *said* their prayers, their petitions would be oftener granted.

XXVIII.

THERE is no sect so readily tolerated by mankind, as that of the Unitarians, nor is there any sect whose tenets are so directly contrary to the true spirit and genius of the Gospel. So likewise there is no sect more humble, yet more despised;—more diligent in *practising* self-denial,

yet more ridiculed;—so charitable, yet so hated; and who serve their God and Master Jesus Christ with more unfeigned love, than the Quakers. To find out the cause of this requires some reflection. Is it from the faith of the Quakers, being less orthodox, than that of the Unitarians? This certainly is not the case from the *effect* or fruit which their faith produces. Then it must arise from their practice. For their persecution and ridicule must spring from one of these causes. The fact is, the world does not much care what your *faith* is, as long as your *practice* does not differ from theirs. For a pious person of the Church of England, or any sect, will be stigmatized by those of the same *faith*, but of a different *practice*. It was the practice, not the faith, that brought Socrates to suffer. It was his open rebuke of the vices and corruptions of the Athenians, and not his want of respect to the *religion of his country*, which caused him to be executed; for *that* he always inculcated, by his sacrificing to the gods, both publicly and *privately*, and by his ordering, in his *last moments*, his most intimate friends who attended him to sacrifice a cock to Æsculapius for him. His conduct was as much a libel upon the corruptions of the Athenians, as that of Quakers and other *truly* religious characters, is a satire upon the vices and corruptions of those who *profess* the *same religion*, but maintain a different *practice* to theirs.

XXIX.

AS much prudence is required in the use of

he commits many gross sins, but not (says he) willfully.—He is like the man who was walking on a road *one* way, while his will, he said, was going *another*.

XXXIII.

THE Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, says, that a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet not have charity. His opinions of this rare gift are very different to those of the present day. A person receives two-pence, in exchange for sixpence, which, from his *antipathy to coppers*, he gives away to the first beggar he meets, and thinks it charity.

XXXIV.

SOME people pull a shilling out of their pocket to give away with as much difficulty and labour as if it required a steam engine to do it.

XXXV.

PEOPLE cannot be too careful in examining the motives of their *own* actions, and at the same time too cautious in judging the motives of *others*. We must remember, that although an action in itself may be good, yet if the motive or principle be bad, it cannot be acceptable in the eyes of God. A person, from ostentation or *secret* pride, may bestow a guinea for the promotion of a charitable institution; in this case the action is noble, but the motive or principle upon which it was founded is bad. Another man, from a pure and disin-

terested love to God and his neighbour, may give a shilling to the same charity; in this case the motive, as well as the action, is good. Now, although the guinea will, according to human calculation, promote the ends of the charity more than the shilling, no one will hesitate to pronounce which act of the two is most acceptable to God. A person of a benevolent and generous disposition may do a kindness without any ostentation and without any principle derived from revealed religion, but by simply following those impulses of pity which Nature, more or less, has implanted in the bosom of every individual. Another, without any particular feelings of pity, but who by nature is selfish, may perform the same generous and disinterested act as the other man did, but upon a principle of which the other is entirely ignorant: I mean a principle derived from a Christian love to his neighbour, and which again arises from his love to God. The former class of persons is generally inconsistent; they are generous before they are just; they are kind according as their feelings lead them; with them benevolence is no settled principle, because it is not founded upon a rock. One reason why there is not any very great distinction between the subjects of Satan and the followers of Christ, is the inability of any person to discover the spring and motives of the actions of others, which are alone known to God. If an angel of *darkness* can sometimes assume the appearance of an angel of *light*, it is no wonder that the hypocrite can wear the mask,—that the heat of enthusiasm can resemble the fervour of piety, or

that the flame of natural sensibility sometimes seems as if it were fed with the oil of pure Christianity. But we cannot be too cautious in judging the motives of the actions of other men. It is enough for *us* that the action is good,—it is the scrutinizing eye of Providence alone that can detect whether the structure, fair to the human eye, is built on a sure foundation. The human heart, from its own depravity, is so extremely apt to think evil of the noblest actions of others, that it requires the utmost vigilance in guarding against judging others, lest we ourselves should fall into condemnation.

XXXVI.

IF books on law and on controversional points in divinity increase in proportion as they do at present, and if the reading of the former is necessary for the knowledge of the law, and if the study of the latter is requisite for the knowledge of God and Christ (which is the end of Christianity,) in the course of a few years there will not be a single lawyer or divine in the kingdom.

XXXVII.

I VERILY believe, that all the public libraries in England could not contain all the books that have been published on divinity from the time of our Saviour to the present day. What a blessing it is that salvation does not depend upon reading them; for it would be such a penance as the most rigid monk would sink under, and purgatory itself would be realized.

XXXVIII.

ONE of our most learned Bishops says, that it would take seven years to read the fathers of the church, and seven more to understand them. Not above a tenth part of their works have come down to us. If we moderns had been favoured with the whole of them, by the unsparing hand of time, it would take seventy years to become a Christian.

XXXIX.

I HAVE heard people express astonishment at the prodigious increase of comments and annotations, &c. upon prophane and sacred authors. They are not, perhaps, aware that the booksellers purchase them of the authors by the sheet, and that the butterman shortly afterwards buys them by the *pound.*

XL.

SIX or a dozen people may read the same book, and each draw different conclusions from it, and all perhaps different from the sense in which the author meant it to be taken. This often arises from each of the readers implying different meanings to the same terms: or else the book is so void of perspicuity, that it means any thing or nothing; or else the author *writes* one thing and *means* another.

XLI.

THE simplest and plainest truths frequently become obscure by endeavouring to explain them.

Thus two and two taken together make four, and the words of our Saviour, "I and my Father are one," are as plain to the understanding, as "the halves of an orange taken together make one whole orange." Now no explanation can make the words of Christ plainer than they already are; but by people endeavouring to explain them, the expositions become infinitely more obscure than the simple words of our Redeemer, and render that unintelligible which he that runs may both read and understand.

XLII.

CHRISTIANS should *live* as if their salvation depended upon their own works, but *die* without regarding them.

XLIII.

THE early Christians looked to the merits of their Redeemer for salvation, while the Roman Catholics expect acceptance with God from the merits of their saints, and we depend upon our good works, I am inclined to think that no one would wish to have a better hope of salvation than the Apostle Paul had, who says that as touching the righteousness of the law he was blameless, but which he considered as *dung*, that he might win Christ and be found in him; "not having," he continues, "my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith." If Paul considered *his* righteousness but dung, I really do not

know what we ought to consider our's. It is a truth deduced from experience, that those who depend upon their own works for salvation, are less zealous in maintaining them than those which depend less upon them. We are rewarded not *for*, but *according to*, our good actions, the more we *do*, and the less we *talk* about them, the better: the less *we* value them, the more God will esteem them; and the less we *rely* on them, the more they will support us.

XLIV.

WHEN a person has a pursuit which he very closely follows, however absurd and even criminal it may be, it is called by himself and his friends "a hobby." In short, as the saying is, "all have their hobbies." When a man makes his Bible his hobby, he is set down to be as great a fool and madman by the other "hobby riders" as he who is in search of the philosopher's stone.

XLV.

THE same circumstance will strike several observers very differently. Several artists shall go and sketch the same mountain, and each draw very different views, all equally correct. So also in reading different historians of the same country, although each mentions many things which the others do not, we ought not on that account to reject those circumstances which they do not all mention. This reflection we should keep in view when we read the Gospels, where the same circumstance is not mentioned by all. Thus Matthew, Mark, and

John each separately mention facts which the other two may not. This circumstance, to a superficial reasoner, will create doubts in his mind as to the truth of their histories; but upon reflection, this *very* circumstance appears the *strongest* possible evidence of the truth of Christianity. For being all three eye-witnesses, if they had wished to impose upon mankind, they would have taken care to have mentioned only the *same* things, and in the *same* words, and would have concerted the cheat together (had it been one), as is the case with all false witnesses.

XLVI.

SOME Deists argue, that if those prophecies (which are said by the Christian to refer to the Messiah) had been delivered by divine inspiration, God would have described him in a more explicit manner than he has done. Thus, for instance, they argue that Jehovah would have said "Jesus Christ the son of Mary and the reputed son of Joseph the carpenter, shall be the Messiah; who after having performed various miracles in healing the sick, and raising the dead, shall be crucified under Pontius Pilate in the reign of Cæsar Augustus, and that on the third day he shall rise again from the dead, and shall ascend into heaven, and that Jerusalem shall in consequence be destroyed." Now it is quite evident that if the prophecies concerning the Messiah had been as explicit as thus described, the Jews would not with their *free-will*, have put Jesus to death; and consequently salvation would not have been brought to mankind. For the crucifixion of Christ was an act

done with the perfect free-will of the Jews. Now I humbly conceive, that such a prophecy would *destroy* the free-will which Providence has given to man, even when he is accomplishing God's irrevocable decrees. If, therefore, the prophecy of an event was nothing but its complete *history*, mankind, from the freedom of their will, would not accomplish it. If such a prophecy had been delivered from heaven to earth, the free-will of man and the fore-purpose of God, I imagine, would be irreconcilable. It is, perhaps, from this cause that God has delivered his purposes in an obscure manner; and consequently the full development of a prophecy does not take place till after its fulfilment; in order that man should unknowingly perform the decrees of heaven, and that at the same time should be accountable to God for his actions, although he may be fulfilling the counsels of the most High.

XLVII.

THE circumstance of the appearance of ghosts has been so well attested by men of all nations, and in all ages, that it has given occasion for many persons to believe in the *probability* of such an occurrence. In short many books have been published, in which the probabilities and improbabilities of ghosts have been fairly discussed. But I have never heard of any argument to show the *impossibility* of seeing one, which however I conceive may be clearly demonstrated. In the first place—a ghost is a spirit which possesses no substance, and is immaterial; for if it

was composed of *matter*, it would be *tangible*,—and if it were tangible, it would cease to be a ghost or spirit. In the next place, before we prove the *invisibility* of a ghost to human eye, let us first consider the properties of the eye, which is the *instrument* whereby the ghost is seen. The eye is a substance which beholds either matter itself, or the *effect* which matter produces. Thus, for example, the eye sees a mountain, a house, &c. which is substance, or it beholds the green colour of the grass; now, although colour is not itself a material substance, yet it is *dependant* upon matter, and without matter, colour would cease to exist. The rays of light, of which the material sun is the source, (for light was in the beginning *embodied* in the sun) act differently upon different surfaces of substances, from which all the varieties of colour arise. A shadow is the *effect* of substance; thus the shadow or shade on the earth, although it is not substance itself, is the effect of the clouds, which are substance; for without the clouds there would be no shade. Thus also, in the case of the magic lantern, the figures represented on the sheet are the effect of the lamp and figures painted upon glass. Now if you take away the painted glass which is the cause, the ghostly representations on the sheet (which are the effect) no longer exist. Upon the same principle the phantasmagoria and all optical delusions, although they are not *ipso facto* matter, are nevertheless the effect of matter, and consequently without matter they would cease to be. So that the eye can only either behold matter itself, or the effect produced from matter,

and consequently "without matter there is nothing seen." Now a ghost is no substance or matter; otherwise it is no ghost. Therefore as it hath been proved, that without matter there is nothing seen," the eye consequently cannot behold a ghost which is not matter. Which was to be proved. Again: since a ghost is not matter, a person can see a ghost with his eyes shut as well as he can with them open, just as in the case of a dream, when a man fancies he sees objects as distinctly as if he were awake; now, no one will say he actually beheld objects while his eyes were shut, and while asleep, although the effect on his mind is the same as if he had been awake, and had really seen the objects he dreamed he saw. A person that tells you he has seen a ghost, has undergone with regard to his mental faculties the same operation as the sleeping man has. The man asleep is not aware of his delusion till he awakes; then he acknowledges from his reason that it was fancy and not reality. Now a person, who is awake and fancies he sees a ghost, is as fully persuaded of the reality of the appearance as the dreamer when asleep, is convinced of the reality of what he sees in his dream; but the only difference between the two cases is this, that he who saw the ghost, will not be convinced as will be the dreamer, that it was a fiction of the imagination, because he knows that his reason while awake is not laid asleep as in the case of the dreamer. For as no evidence to an individual is so strong as that of the senses, the ghostseer will not be persuaded that he received the delusion in his mind's eye

through the medium of his disturbed imagination.

It may now be considered what is the cause of so many people in all ages attesting the appearances of ghosts. Many phenomena of nature have given rise to the supposition of ghosts, which have vanished as the gradual light of experimental philosophy has expelled the darkness of superstition; but there are facts which are related, which cannot belong to the phenomena of nature, and which some superficial reasoners solve by supposing the accounts to be fabulous: but this is an easy way but not a philosophical manner of solving a difficulty; it is in fact cutting the Gordian knot. But let us fairly meet the question, and not think that mankind in all ages, and unconnected with one another should have endeavoured to propagate that which they knew to be false. A peculiar circumstance attending ghosts is this, that two or more persons never see the *same* ghost at the *same* time. Now what one man sees, another can. The theory of ghosts in fact becomes better known as the science of physic increases; it is now well known in the medical world that it is a delusion of the brain generally arising from a disordered stomach. There was once a young man who was entirely free from superstition, who assured his friend that he every night about twilight saw a ghost at the foot of his bed, he was of course, as is generally the case, laughed at by his friend for his credulity and fears. Still however the ghost paid him his regular visit. His friend was determined to

convince him of his folly, and having learnt from him the exact description of the dress of his nocturnal visitor, he dressed himself precisely in the same manner as the ghost was described to him, and at the fated hour he stole into his friend's room, and posted himself at the foot of the bed. His friend awoke as usual, and on casting his eyes at the foot of the bed, he exclaimed, "Oh God, there are two of them:" His friend seeing there was no ghost, and then knowing it must be an affection of a disordered imagination, silently left the room, and went for a Physician, who having well physicked his patient, soon *excommunicated* his nocturnal visitor.

XLVIII.

IT is generally supposed that those who are engaged to be married, become better acquainted with each other's characters by a long acquaintance; but in fact courtship is a masquerade in which people appear in different characters to what they really are. The mask is not taken off while the deceit is necessary; for people before marriage conceal their imperfections and bad qualities, and deceive each other as much as possible, and then wonder at their mutual disappointment when they appear in their true characters.

XLIX.

THERE are certain clergymen of the church of England who are stigmatized with the epithet *evangelical.* The word signifies "agreeably to the Gospel." Evangelism is the promulgation of the Gospel. Since this is the meaning of the

word, the greatest compliment, that can be paid a clergyman, is to call him *evangelical*, for Christ and all his apostles were evangelical. The Greek word for *Gospel* is Ευανγελλια, evangellia, *the glad tidings*—he therefore who brings us glad tidings, is evangelical. He that brings us *not* glad tidings does not bring the Gospel, and consequently he that does *not* preach the Gospel is not evangelical, and consequently again is no minister of Christ: for Christ's injunctions are peremptory: "Go preach the *Gospel*." What it may now be asked is this Gospel, this evangelism, or "glad tidings of great joy." That mankind *all* are sinners. That acceptance with God is offered to *all*, but given only to those who truly repent and have faith in the atonement of our Saviour Jesus Christ—that our *own* righteousness is but filthy rags, and that Christ wrought out for us and performed in our stead that *perfect* righteousness and obedience to the law, which it required at our hands, but which, from the corruption of our fallen nature, we are unable to perform. This is what Christ and his Apostles *preached*, and for which they *suffered*.

L.

WHY do women speak in such harsh terms of the frail part of their sex, and why do men pity them? Both do it from interested motives.

LI.

THERE are certain truths in scripture which a young convert cannot at first embrace, and which should gradually be unfolded to him. There are

babes in Christ, as the Apostle says, who cannot bear the strong meat and drink that a full grown man can. Great prudence is necessary. We must not approach the sun of truth too suddenly, lest its powerful rays turn our weak minds; it must be a *gradual* not a *sudden* exposure to its divine rays, in order that by degrees we should be able to bear the full force of its meridian splendour. We must, like the husbandman, be patient; we must not expect the seed *suddenly* to sprout and ripen; a growing and a ripening sun are very different—the yet tender sprout in *spring* would wither at a *summer's* sun, but both the fostering spring and the ripening summer are necessary to bring the corn to perfection, when the Angel of God shall lay the sickle to the harvest and we all shall be reaped.

LII.

THERE was once in a village a poor simpleton who scarcely knew his right hand from his left; from curiosity he one Sunday went to church and heard a sermon, the text of which was "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." Poor Tom from the elegant language of the discourse could not understand a syllable of it: he went home repeating the text to himself. By the next morning he was taken ill of a violent cold and fever, which he had caught the preceding evening at church. Poor Tom's fever now seemed to baffle the skill of the village apothecary; he became delirious, and as people generally repeat in their delirium that which is

heaviest on their mind, Tom kept repeating "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, poor Tom is a sinner, therefore Jesus Christ came to save poor Tom." The violence of the fever now seemed to abate, but being of a delicate constitution he was almost exhausted. His mind became more collected, and he was sensible that poor Tom soon would be no more. He continued repeating to himself the words of the text, whose meaning entirely absorbed the slender faculties of his mind. His features now wore the calm and dignified aspect and composure of a dying christian. The good clergyman of the village attended his dying hours, who endeavoured to assist poor Tom in the understanding of divine truth. The poor fellow took the hand of his kind visitor and feebly replied: "Sir, you are kindness itself in thus visiting and teaching me, but indeed"—exhausted nature prevented him from finishing his sentence; after a few seconds poor Tom with a triumphant smile, gently raising up his hand upon his breast, faintly muttered—"God be merciful to me a sinner," and breathed his last.

LIII.

THERE are people in the world who *profess* themselves to be Trinitarians, yet ridicule those who believe in the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit in purifying and "giving us true repentance," although there is scarce a page in the Liturgy, in which they do not every Sunday pray for its divine influence. They are like those who deny any sweetness in sugar. For as sweet-

ness is the very property and *essence* of sugar, so the sanctifying or regenerating power is the very property or essence of the Holy Ghost. To deny the properties of any thing is to deny the thing itself; to deny the attributes of God is to deny God himself. It is not at all astonishing that such people, although they *profess* to believe in the Trinity, ridicule those that acknowledge from experience its divine influence. *For* being *fully* persuaded in their own orthodoxy, and having never experienced its effects themselves, they immediately set others down for fools and fit objects for ridicule. Whether such *orthodox* persons come under the condemnation of those who (our Saviour says) blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, is for them to consider, and the day of judgment to show.

LIV.

SOME men go *into* the church, like some who go *to* it, and upon the same principle that men go *into* the army, because it is a *gentlemanly profession.*

LV.

THE different heresies, which have befallen the church of Christ, I consider as so many attempts of man to force the gate of the sheepfold, in order to bring in some rotten sheep.* The porter however will have the sheep shorn first, and marked with the master's name, before he will open the gate: there is no gap whereby they can

* Vide St. John's Gospel, Chap. x.

steal in,* no entrance but the true† door, which is opened at the perfect free-will of the porter. He refuses every bribe, however splendid;—he admits no one in *his own* filthy rags, however gaudy and splendid they may seem in the eyes of the wearer, and however attached he may be to them from long usage; but he freely gives a garment of his own weaving, which cannot be bought—which will never wear out—and which the receiver will wear at the marriage-supper of his God.

LVI.

THE Holy Ghost, or as in the Greek expressed πνευμα το αγιον, has an active as well as a passive signification; it is not only holy in *itself*, but has likewise the power of *imparting* holiness to others. It is like (with reverence be it spoken) to the loadstone, which not only in a *passive sense* has the property of attraction, but likewise *actively* it possesses the power of imparting the same properties or virtues (though in a less degree) to another piece of iron. The Holy Spirit, like the loadstone, has also the powers of *repulsion* as well as *attraction*: for it also *repulses* those who with hardened and impenitent hearts deny its influences or properties, as well as it *attracts* those who with humble and penitential sorrow for their sins present themselves at the foot of Jehovah's throne of mercy.

LVII.

CALLING one morning upon a lady of my acquaintance, I happened in conversation to mention an intimate friend of mine, who, instead of the

* Verse 1. † Verse 7.

thoughtless dissipated infidel he once was, had become a sober minded Christian. I mentioned the circumstance to the lady, expecting to hear her expressions of joy at the change which had taken place in him, especially as I had once heard her mention his former infidelity with the *greatest horror*. What was my astonishment when she told me she hated saints, and that for her part she thought them quite as bad, if not worse, than infidels, and that my friend was a rank methodist. I replied I was sorry to hear that, as schism was a thing which it was the duty of every true Christian carefully to avoid; and I asked her her reason for thinking my friend a methodist. "My reason," said she, "for thinking so, is *because* I am *sure* of it." I said her reason was very conclusive, and I lamented it exceedingly, since I had been informed that he knew not a single person but of the established Church—had never once attended a dissenting congregation—had never read one of their publications, and that he never would read a single other book upon religion but the Bible! "Oh," said she, "I don't mean to say he does, but I know he is so very methodistical as to read the Bible the whole day." I told her I thought she might be mistaken. "No, I am not," answered she, "*because* I think so, and know it." I replied that I had that morning received a letter from him, giving an account of his pursuits, in which he mentioned that he applied so hard to mathematics, (as he was reading for an honour) that his friends could hardly get him from his book to take exercise. "So he does, I forgot—I meant to say (answered

she, blushing with confusion) that he studied mathematics very closely." I then told her that, by way relaxation, he every evening after tea read his Bible. "Relaxation! do you call it," said she. I replied that although *she* did not find it so, it was not fair to judge of other people's feelings by our own, and that the Bible was to him a source of the greatest comfort and amusement. "Amusement,"—interrupted she, "you astonish me!—I really thought he had better sense." I told her she ought not to be surprised—that variety of amusements were endless —that the musician is surprised to find that others are not so enraptured with music as himself. One man is really astonished how any person can bear going to the opera before the ballet—another is surprised at any one going at *all*—the sportsman cannot imagine that there is any amusement in balls and concerts. And upon these reflections, I told her that we ought not to suppose that those who pursue different objects to our own do not receive equal and even greater enjoyments; that the boy who pursues a butterfly may receive the same enjoyment as the huntsman who follows the hounds: and consequently, that although she might not find any relaxation or amusement in reading the Bible herself, she should not suppose those to be hypocrites who profess they do: and I added I was sure she did not speak from *envying* the *resources* of my friend, since I knew that she possessed a very fine copy of the Bible, and which of course she had purchased in order to study it."—The entrance of some morning visitors put an end to the conversation, and I took my leave.

LVIII.

ONE of the greatest sources of happiness in heaven will be, that saints will be better enabled to understand one another.

LIX.

PALEY's Evidences of Christianity are not more converting to a man of reflection than Celsus's Evidences against it. The latter wrote in the second century against Christianity: he did not attempt to *deny* the miracles of Christ or his Apostles, but even *believed* in them; yet he declared that they were performed by magic. Porphyry another infidel writer admitted that Christ was received up into heaven. The Emperor Julian declared that Christ did nothing worthy of *fame*, except curing the halt, the blind, and the deaf; of walking on the surface of the sea, and expelling unclean spirits. The Emperor Tiberius (under whose reign Christ was crucified) proposed to the senate the deification of Christ, from an account of his miracles which he had received from *Pontius Pilate*. The enemies of Christianity at that time admitted that which is now only wanted to be proved.

LX.

THOSE who affect to despise the *opinion* of the world, have generally given the world reason to have *no opinion* of them; upon the same principle if you hear an author affect to despise the criticism of reviewers, you may conclude that his works deserve their censure.

LXI.

A clergyman of the Church of England should well know what *Calvinism* is, and be able distinctly to mark out the characteristic line which distinguishes the faith of Calvin from that of his own church; for if he enter into the dispute without a discriminating and perspicuous mind, he may, in endeavouring to *shave* his adversary's *beard*, by accident *cut his own throat*. There is nothing so generally *abused*, and yet so little *known*, as Calvinism.

LXII.

NOTHING, generally speaking, is so easy as to *give* advice, and nothing so difficult as to take it. A man asks another's opinion not in order to follow it, (for he has made up his mind before he asks) but in order to know if it agrees with his own; if it should happen to coincide with his, he receives it as a compliment; if it should not, he replies, "Do *you* think so—why I don't." This reflection may be applied to some who read the Bible; for they have made up their minds before they open the book, and however contrary the doctrines they there read may be to their own preconceived opinions, they reject them; and however strongly marked and clearly delineated they behold their own characters and vices, they will not apply them to themselves.—It is useless *going* to *school* if we refuse to be *instructed*.

LXIII.

ATHEISTS have more faith than requisite to make a Christian; *their* credulity is most surprising.

LXIV.

SOME people prefer the cover to the *inside* of a book. They seem afraid of *opening* a book, from fear of *hurting* the *binding*.

LXV.

EXTERNAL evidences will prove that Christ came to save *sinners*; but my reader should know that internal evidence alone can prove that he came to save *him*.

LXVI.

IF people took the *same* pains, and made use of the *same* standard in judging themselves as they do in judging others, Christians would better perform the commands of their Divine Master.

LXVII.

WE *propose*, but it is God only that *disposes;* we propose to repent and to do good, but it is God only that can *dispose* us to do so.

LXVIII.

HINTS and insinuations are much more distressing to the feelings than direct accusations; the reason is, because the person fancies that there is more meant by the hint than there really is; but a person knows the full extent of a direct accusation. As there are exceptions to every rule there is one to this: a person in the pulpit may insinuate that there is such a place as hell and that there is some danger in going to it, which he may be assured will never *distress* the feelings of

his hearers, as hints on any other subject, however trifling, generally do; but his hearers even imagine that the preacher means *less* than he insinuates, which is the very reverse of the rule I have laid down. People will take hints upon all subjects but this.

LXIX.

AMBITION, interest, honours, the fear of offending our relatives, or the whole world itself, *must* be sacrificed at the shrine of *truth*; or else *truth* at the last day will sacrifice *us*.

LXX.

HUME's reasoning against miracles amounts to this, "I do not believe, because I will not believe." He brings forward as a *reason* that which is just wanted to be *proved*, viz:—"that no human testimony is sufficient to induce one to believe in a miracle:" which from experience is found to be false, as human testimony *has* been found sufficient to induce millions of men to believe in miracles. Wiser men than Hume have believed; and as "Exceptio probat regulam," his infidelity proves the truth of Christianity.

LXXI.

SOME persons, and even theological writers, are very fond of accounting for the miracles recorded in the Old Testament in a natural manner; thus they imagine that the pillar which went before the Israelites was nothing more than the sand whirled up like a water-spout, as is recorded by Mr. Bruce, which, from the rays of the sun

shining through it had the appearance of a pillar of fire, and that it was called so by Moses in the figurative mode of expressing things in the East: this is certainly very ingenious, but unfortunately the pillar of fire preceded the Israelites during the *night:* the passage of the Red Sea* is likewise accounted for by a violent Etesian wind blowing from the north-west, and so rendering it fordable; but unfortunately it says that the water was a wall on *both* sides of the Israelites, which could not have been the case had it thus taken place. Lot's wife is said by some commentators to have been overtaken by lava, which run over her; and thus she became a pillar: this is ingenious but rather an unfortunate remark, for water, lava, &c. always rise to their level; if, therefore, the lava ran over her head it must have overwhelmed her: how then could she have become a pillar?

LXXII.

SOME persons when they begin to see that Christianity is worthy of a *little* more attention than the world condescends to give it, commence where God begins, viz. with his inscrutable fore-purposes; this unwarranted conduct is directly contrary to the injunctions of Holy Writ, and has led

* Diodorus Siculus says, that the Troglodytes, the indigenous inhabitants of that very spot, had a tradition from father to son from the earliest ages, that once this division of the sea *did* happen there; and that after leaving its bottom dry, the sea came back again and covered it with great fury. The fact that the ground was *bare* to the very *bottom* of the gulf is admitted by this curious tradition.

men into awful extravagancies by deducing unwarrantable conclusions—they begin where they ought to end—and end where they ought to begin.

LXXIII.

THERE is a great difference in believing there is a God and believing *in* him. Most people are not aware of this.

LXXIV.

MANKIND are seeking after wisdom without knowing what she is, or where she is to be found; some seek her among shells and fossils, some among poppies and cabbages, some among dogs and horses, some among curves and straight lines, others among Greek metres and digammas; but after all she is only to be found in the Bible, if you call upon her there, she will be sure to repay you the visit; if you make her your friend in this world, she will not forsake you in the next. If this be true, those who are reckoned the wisest men are in fact the greatest fools.

LXXV.

ARISTOTLE says that no one should publish any thing before he is fifty years of age: I have been told by those who are capable of judging, that Aristotle should not have composed any thing till he was an hundred years old. If he had done this we should have been much more indebted to him than we are at present. If however mankind had followed his advice, Socrates would not have taught, nor Christ have brought salvation.

LXXVI.

IF people were to seek for divinity out of the word of God instead of out of the writings of men, their minds would be much better settled on points of the most importance. Men who are fond of studying folios of divinity never pay much attention to *the book* itself. So likewise, those who with humility make the Bible the fountain from which they take the living water, drink of a much purer and clearer stream, and will seldom condescend to drink of the troubled waters of a polluted pool. The creed of the former description of persons generally begins with believing in Luther, Calvin, &c. while that of the latter begins and ends in believing in God the Father who created them, and God the Son who redeemed them. People do not reflect that by making the writings of men to supersede the word of God, they, *in effect*, worship the creature more than the Creator. God will never bless the writings of men as he will his own. Christ himself tells us to search the Scriptures; the Greek word for *search* here signifies as men do in a mine. The Scriptures are a mine, but every spade full is precious ore; a man may search among the rubbish of creed makers, and may occasionally find a lump of the *purest* gold, but the danger is lest he should take that for pure metal which is nothing but *dross*, or lest he may pass over, unheeded, some precious ore which lies concealed by the *quantity* of rubbish which covers it, and find his work but labour lost.

LXXVII.

RELIGION in this country is made too much

a party question. Christianity is divided into so many sects, each party thinking *all* in the wrong but itself. It is much to be wished that this will turn out to be true, for then every one will be in the *right.*

LXXVIII.

IF you are in company with a person who disgusts you with his self-sufficiency respecting a book which you suspect he has never read: ask him if he has read upon what he is talking; if he says he has, tell him then to judge for himself; if he confesses that he has not, ask him how then he can talk about it. This will soon settle disputes. For men and women often talk of that which they have never read, and which they do not understand.

LXXIX.

THE mind of man is so extremely prejudiced that it will only bear certain truths when clothed with a certain phraseology. Thus you may speak to a person of reformation, or tell him of an altered young man; you may likewise speak to him of the spirit that leads us to do good, and of the spirit that tempts us do evil, but if you are so unfortunate as to mention renovation or regeneration instead of reformation—a *converted* young man instead of an altered one—you may be sure that you will be set down for a canting methodist. Nay, I have known some people so extremely ignorant that they will agree with you, that God will assist us in overcoming evil, and will enable us to do good; but directly you say that the

sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is given to them who will pray for it, they will call you an enthusiast directly. If you ask them how then does God, who *is the Holy Spirit*, enable them according to their belief to overcome sin, they cannot tell you.

LXXX.

THERE are some people who undervalue *faith*, and at the same time admire *charity*. They are like the farmers who despise the straw which bears the corn, without reflecting that it is the blade which produces the ear, and that if the *blade* be injured the ear withers. For charity is the fruit of faith and can grow on no *other* stem: and as the straw *if* it bear not *grain* is fit only to be trodden down down and burnt, so is that faith which is not productive of charity. We must remember that neither the blade of faith nor ear of charity *can* in this world be separated, for they are both yet but *green*, and will only be fit to be gathered in the next world; when the ear will only be preserved, for the blade will not then be required.

LXXXI.

IT is impossible for a clergyman to preach the truth, and at the same time to please his hearers. If he tells his congregation that the world is in a state of condemnation, and that mankind can only escape the damnation of hell by a repentant

faith on Christ, as the only refuge from the wrath of God, he is called by them dreadfully uncharitable. According to this, the most *uncharitable* person who has yet appeared on earth, is our Lord and Saviour himself, who says "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell,"—and "unless ye repent ye shall *all* likewise perish;" and in his parable of the sower he describes *only one* description of persons out of the four into which he has divided it, who shall be saved.

LXXXII.

THE Evangelical clergy are said to be fond of condemning all others but themselves. This is so far from being true, that they are even more anxious in saving the souls of others, than others are of saving their own.

LXXXIII.

MEN are often led to atheism from their inability to understand God's moral government of the universe, without considering that it is impossible for a finite being to comprehend the nature or actions of one that is infinite. The child who refuses to obey his parent from his inability to understand the reason of his commands, or who thinks that his father is unjust in correcting him, resembles him who in trouble repines against the justice of God. There is nothing so much admired or so little understood as justice. That which appears just to one man, appears equally unjust to another; and that which

is justice in one age is injustice in another. We have no *innate* moral sense of justice, for if we had we should all be agreed upon it. *Our* knowledge of justice arises merely from expediency, which varies according as the expediency of the thing requires. It is justice to hang a man for robbing another from expediency, on account of no other punishment being great enough to prevent the crime; now to the man who does not *see* the expediency of hanging, it appears injustice. That law, which in one age is just from expediency, in another is unjust from the inexpediency of it; moreover, two persons shall have very different opinions of justice upon the same case. Thus for example, a man is condemned for stealing, and the jurymen may be *convinced* of his *guilt*, yet each individual of them may have very different views about the punishment he ought to suffer. Death might appear perfectly just to one man, while to another juryman it might appear equally unjust. If then, upon things of the clearest and most perspicuous nature, men are *incapable* of judging of justice or injustice in their *own* affairs, how is it *possible* for us to be able to understand the justice of God, in his punishments and inflictions in this or the world to come.

LXXXIV.

MY friend Jack Sensible and myself were once in company together with a gentleman who was a great admirer of the drama, and who expatiated for half an hour together with the greatest enthusiasm upon the excellency of theatrical representations; after the gentleman had

expended his oratorical powers till he was completely exhausted, my friend turned round and asked him, "Can you tell me, sir, what good, moral or physical, does the drama produce? Judge every thing by this rule." "What good—do you ask," exclaimed the gentleman, "consider the moral sentiments which are delivered by the actors"—"And immoral ones," added Jack.—"Do not," continued the gentleman, "the feelings of the audience sympathize with the scenes of *struggling virtue*"—"And," interrupted Jack, "*successful vice.*" "Is it not," resumed the gentleman, "a delightful sight to behold a crouded audience dissolved into tears from a tragedy of our immortal Shakespeare,"—"and by an indecent afterpiece," added Jack, "as easily effaced." "There you will find *vice* exhibited *odious*"—"And virtue and piety," said Jack, "*contemptible.*" "In short," continued my friend, "the theatre is the cause of more vice than any thing in London; people go there for an innocent amusement, and *leave* it for a no less guilty one. The theatres would be empty if the stage were the only attraction; vice becomes daring, as virtue is lulled asleep. There is not a night but what the theatre is the means of some seduction. The unsuspecting girl trusts herself with her pretended admirer, and is betrayed. The glittering scene, the glaring lights, rouse the youthful imagination; the ties of restraint being broken, and the veil of modesty removed—hypocrisy is unmasked—and conscience at length being quieted, resistance becomes vain, and vice finally triumphs over the ruins of

fallen virtue. There are men who like blood hounds hunt the theatres, and like the harpies of old spoil every thing they touch. And what man does not date the outset of his career of vice from the day he went to the theatre; how many like George Barnwell have been led from error to error, and from vice to vice, and how many of both sexes have not there first been ruined, and become lost to their friends—their relatives—and their God. And although there are many who frequent the theatre for no other purpose but amusement, yet by their presence they as much sanction the vice that is practised there, as the purchasers of contraband goods encourage smuggling. And moreover," added Jack, "what lady can behold the dancing at the opera without either being disgusted, or"—a lady here entering the room prevented Jack from finishing his sentence, and put an end to the conversation.

LXXXV.

THOSE who have only received the fundamental doctrines of Christ are called by St. Paul babes, infants, in Christ; keeping up his metaphor, and judging from observation, I should say that some continue *infants* all their lives, while others I am afraid are never *born*.

LXXXVI.

PEOPLE in general take an interest in the salvation of other men's souls, in proportion as they do in the salvation of their own. This ratio may be calculated from the infidel who industriously

circulates his poison, to the missionary who leaves his home to apply the antidote to others. A kind of thermometer of measuring men's zeal in destroying and saving mankind may thus be established, which should be divided into so many degrees, defining the relative warmth or coldness of each party. Infidels I should reckon much below the freezing point, who are completely frost-bitten and benumbed. They are according to this scale a consolidated lump of quick-silver, which I should earnestly recommend my readers from touching; for it has a benumbing influence, and it is extremely difficult and painful to cure those patients who from handling it have themselves become frost-bitten. There is another set a few degrees higher on the scale, just about freezing point, who are neither absolutely freezing nor thawing. They are a set of hazardous skaters, who continue flourishing upon the ice which keeps bending and cracking underneath their feet; and although repeatedly warned by those on *terra firma*, they assure their advisers that the ice is quite as firm as the ground, and entreat them to join them on it, "for the cracks which you hear," say they, "are proofs of its strength; besides skating time is short, and we must make the best use of it." The ice occasionally breaks in—some are lost! others are saved, but with great difficulty, by those on firm ground at their own imminent danger, from going amidst them on the ice to save them. It is very extraordinary, that the warning of the men who have been saved makes no serious impression on the rest of the skaters, who imagine that

the ice will bear as long as they are on it, and that when they see any danger to themselves they will come off it and join those on firm ground. They all say that they will forsake their amusement some time or other; but they are generally so fascinated with the pleasure, that they put it off till it is too late, and the ice breaks in with them and they are drowned. There is another set of men who are afraid of going boldly on the ice at once, but from the *ice* being so smooth, so glassy, and so tempting, and not seeing any *harm*, they venture to put on one skate, and just try a little; they keep the other on firm ground, lest they should *fall*. These one-legged skaters are even more ridiculed by those on the middle of the ice than those who will not *even* venture near the edge, and they are called by the skating party cowards. Some of the one-legged skating gentlemen, from the *heavy falls* they receive, take off their skate and return to their former brethren on firm ground, whose society they always preferred; but being not aware of the *slipperiness* of the *ice*, and of the falls and bruises they would receive, they had ventured on with one skate to try the experiment. But others, alas, more frequently finding that they can go so much *faster* with the leg on the *ice* than with *that* on the firm ground, which only hinders their progress on the *ice*, and even makes them stumble more; and being excited by the ridicule of the skaters on one side, and by the suspicious manner in which they are looked upon on the other, they immediately put on two skates—join the skating party—become even more desperately bold than any of the rest, and finally perish with them.

Those at the degree of fever heat are the South-cotonians; every other set take their respective degrees between fever heat and freezing point. My ignorance, thank God! of the polemical discussions which agitate and disgrace the Christian world, as well as my incapacity in delineating the characteristic features of the innumerable denominations of Christians of the present day, prevents my presuming to be a moderator of their respective degrees.

LXXXVII.

WHEN Carlile was tried for his publication of Paine's theological works, the question was not whether Christianity was false, (that the court had nothing to do with) but whether it was the religion of the country; it being against the laws to write against it; he was upon this ground as justly condemned as any other criminal who has broken the laws of his country. But whether it was a *prudent* act in trying him, from the inability of Government to suppress the publication of the work, should be considered; since the curiosity alone which has been raised by the publicity of the trial will tempt many to read the book, who otherwise had not heard of nor cared for it. For few people, *indifferent* about religion, will give the price of Paine's works to become *infidels*; and I am sure no *real* Christian will.

LXXXVIII.

SOME people declare that they cannot believe a miracle unless they see one. Such persons do not consider that they *could* not believe if they

were to see one; for faith is the evidence of things *not* seen. No one, except a blind man, can believe that there is a sun, because he *knows* it. There is a difference between believing a thing and knowing it. I believe that there is a city called Rome, but do not know it. Some Deists argue that, as according to Christianity men obtain salvation by faith in Christ, his name should have been written in the Heavens, or made known by some manifestation as plain as this. Now if such a revelation as this had been given, it would no longer be *any* faith in receiving Christ to be the Messiah! for faith is the evidence of things not seen. I believe that there is a planet called Georgium Sidus, but do not know it, for I never saw it: now if I followed Hume's plan I should disbelieve it, for I have the bare assertion of Dr. Herschell that there is such a planet; besides he might have imposed upon mankind, for the fame of discovering something new. However, it may be objected that it is highly improbable that he would have attempted to impose upon mankind, on account of the facility by which he would have been refuted by the other astronomers; but if the Doctor had wished to have imposed upon mankind he might have urged that he had the largest telescope in the world, and that it could not be seen by any other instrument, and that jealousy induced others to deny the existence of the planet he had discovered; as the plainest truths in philosophy have always met with opposition. But let it be granted that such an imposition might

easily have been detected, yet still it does not follow the Doctor might not have attempted to impose upon the public, for impositions much more easily detected have been palmed upon the public in every department of science and literature. So then, upon Mr. Hume's system, there is not sufficient evidence to induce a wise man to believe in the existence of the planet: moreover, a disciple of Hume may urge that it is inconsistent with the impartiality of the Supreme Being that no one (but those who look through Dr. Herschell's telescope) should behold so beautiful a sight, and it is impossible that the Creator would grant such a peculiar blessing to the philosophers; upon such reasoning a disciple of Hume is bound by his own principles to deny the existence of the planet Georgium Sidus.

LXXXIX.

Spina relicta riget.

LIFE to a rose tree may we not compare,
Which few the *roses*, many *thorns* doth bear?
The tree in summer doth with roses flourish,
Regardless of the thorns it yet must nourish:
The thorns spring up where *once* the roses were;
E'en so from pleasures spring our woe and care.

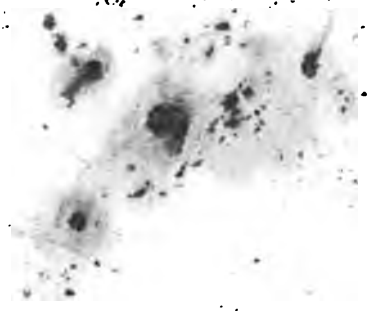
XC.

HOW often do we break thy golden chain,
Say goddess Hope, how often linked again;
Unwilling do we *lose*—yet ever willing *find*
The pleasing fetters of a sanguine mind.

XCI.

AS when fair Sol with bright'ning ray,
His course now finish'd, shuts the day,
The sky serene, and Heav'ns declare
The morrow equally as fair;
The morning dawns—the thunders break,
The mountains tremble—valleys shake:
So does the day from *evils* pure
Our thoughtless minds with smiles allure,
And hides, thus blinded with delight,
The morrow's evil from our sight.

FINIS.



LETTER

TO

* * * * * * * * * *,

ON THE

REV. W. L. BOWLES' STRICTURES

ON THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF POPE.

BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON.

"I'll play at *Bowls* with the sun and moon."

OLD SONG.

"My mither's auld, Stir, and she has rather forgotten hersel in speaking to my Leddy, that canna weel bide to be contradickit, (as I ken naebody likes it, if they could help themsels.)"

TALES OF MY LANDLORD, *Old Mortality*, vol. ii. page 163.

SECOND EDITION.

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1821.

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LETTER, &c.

RAVENNA, February 7th, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

IN the different pamphlets which you have had the goodness to send me, on the Pope and Bowles' controversy, I perceive that my name is occasionally introduced by both parties. Mr. Bowles refers more than once to what he is pleased to consider "a remarkable circumstance," not only in his letter to Mr. Campbell, but in his reply to the Quarterly. The Quarterly also and Mr. Gilchrist have conferred on me the dangerous honour of a quotation; and Mr. Bowles indirectly makes a kind of appeal to me personally, by saying, "Lord Byron, *if he remembers* the circumstance, will *witness*"—(*witness* IN ITALICS, an ominous character for a testimony at present.)

I shall not avail myself of a "non mi ricordo" even after so long a residence in Italy; —I *do* "remember the circumstance,"—and have no reluctance to relate it (since called upon so to do) as correctly as the distance of time and the impression of intervening events will permit me. In the year 1812, more than three years after the publication of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," I had the honour of meeting Mr. Bowles in the house of our venerable host of "Human Life, &c." the last Argonaut of classic English poetry, and the Nestor of our inferior race of living poets. Mr. Bowles calls this "soon after" the publication; but to me three years appear a considerable segment of the immortality of a modern poem. I recollect nothing of "the rest of the company going into another room" —nor, though I well remember the topography of our host's elegant and classically furnished mansion, could I swear to the very room where the conversation occurred, though the "taking *down* the poem" seems to fix it in the library. Had it been "taken *up*" it would probably have been in the drawing-room. I presume also that the "remarkable circumstance" took place *after* dinner, as I

conceive that neither Mr. Bowles's politeness nor appetite would have allowed him to detain "the rest of the company" standing round their chairs in the "other room" while we were discussing "the Woods of Madeira" instead of circulating its vintage. Of Mr. Bowles's "good humour" I have a full and not ungrateful recollection; as also of his gentlemanly manners and agreeable conversation. I speak of the *whole*, and not of particulars; for whether he did or did not use the precise words printed in the pamphlet, I cannot say, nor could he with accuracy. Of "the tone of seriousness" I certainly recollect nothing: on the contrary, I thought Mr. Bowles rather disposed to treat the subject lightly; for he said (I have no objection to be contradicted if incorrect), that some of his good-natured friends had come to him and exclaimed, "Eh! Bowles! how came you to make the Woods of Madeira?" &c. &c. and that he had been at some pains and pulling down of the poem to convince them that he had never made "the Woods" do any thing of the kind. He was right, and *I was wrong*, and have been wrong still up to this acknowledgment; for I ought to have looked twice

before I wrote that which involved an inaccuracy capable of giving pain. The fact was, that although I had certainly before read "the Spirit of Discovery," I took the quotation from the review. But the mistake was mine, and not the *review's*, which quoted the passage correctly enough, I believe. I blundered—God knows how—into attributing the tremors of the lovers to the "Woods of Madeira," by which they were surrounded. And I hereby do fully and freely declare and asseverate, that the Woods did *not* tremble to a kiss, and that the lovers did. I quote from memory—

> A kiss
> Stole on the listening silence, &c. &c.
> They [the lovers] trembled, even as if the power, &c.

And if I had been aware that this declaration would have been in the smallest degree satisfactory to Mr. Bowles, I should not have waited nine years to make it, notwithstanding that "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" had been suppressed some time previously to my meeting him at Mr. Rogers's. Our worthy host might indeed have told him as much, as it was at his representation that I suppressed it. A new edition of that lampoon was pre-

paring for the press, when Mr. Rogers represented to me, that "I was *now* acquainted with many of the persons mentioned in it, and with some on terms of intimacy;" and that he knew "one family in particular to whom its suppression would give pleasure." I did not hesitate one moment, it was cancelled instantly; and it is no fault of mine that it has ever been republished. When I left England, in April, 1816, with no very violent intentions of troubling that country again, and amidst scenes of various kinds to distract my attention—almost my last act, I believe, was to sign a power of attorney, to yourself, to prevent or suppress any attempts (of which several had been made in Ireland) at a republication. It is proper that I should state, that the persons with whom I was subsequently acquainted, whose names had occurred in that publication, were made my acquaintances at their own desire, or through the unsought intervention of others. I never, to the best of my knowledge, sought a personal introduction to any. Some of them to this day I know only by correspondence; and with one of those it was begun by myself, in consequence, how-

ever, of a polite verbal communication from a third person.

I have dwelt for an instant on these circumstances, because it has sometimes been made a subject of bitter reproach to me to have endeavoured to *suppress* that satire. I never shrunk, as those who know me know, from any personal consequences which could be attached to its publication. Of its subsequent suppression, as I possessed the copyright, I was the best judge and the sole master. The circumstances which occasioned the suppression I have now stated; of the motives, each must judge according to his candour or malignity. Mr. Bowles does me the honour to talk of "noble mind," and "generous magnanimity;" and all this because "the circumstance would have been explained had not the book been suppressed." I see no "nobility of mind" in an act of simple justice; and I hate the word "*magnanimity*," because I have sometimes seen it applied to the grossest of impostors by the greatest of fools; but I would have "explained the circumstance," notwithstanding "the suppression of the book," if Mr. Bowles had expressed any desire that I

should. As the "gallant Galbraith" says to "Baillie Jarvie," "Well, the devil take the mistake and all that occasioned it." I have had as great and greater mistakes made about me personally and poetically, once a month for these last ten years, and never cared very much about correcting one or the other, at least after the first eight and forty hours had gone over them.

I must now, however, say a word or two about Pope, of whom you have my opinion more at large in the unpublished letter *on* or *to* (for I forget which) the editor of "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine;"—and here I doubt that Mr. Bowles will not approve of my sentiments.

Although I regret having published "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," the part which I regret the least is that which regards Mr. Bowles with reference to Pope. Whilst I was writing that publication, in 1807 and 1808, Mr. Hobhouse was desirous that I should express our mutual opinion of Pope, and of Mr. Bowles's edition of his works. As I had completed my outline, and felt lazy, I requested that *he* would do so. He did it. His fourteen lines on Bowles's Pope are in

the first edition of "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers;" and are quite as severe and much more poetical than my own in the second. On reprinting the work, as I put my name to it, I omitted Mr. Hobhouse's lines, and replaced them with my own, by which the work gained less than Mr. Bowles. I have stated this in the preface to the second edition. It is many years since I have read that poem; but the Quarterly Review, Mr. Octavius Gilchrist, and Mr. Bowles himself, have been so obliging as to refresh my memory, and that of the public. I am grieved to say, that in reading over those lines, I repent of their having so far fallen short of what I meant to express upon the subject of Bowles's edition of Pope's Works. Mr. Bowles says, that "Lord Byron *knows* he does *not* deserve this character." I know no such thing. I have met Mr. Bowles occasionally, in the best society in London; he appeared to me an amiable, well informed, and extremely able man. I desire nothing better than to dine in company with such a mannered man every day in the week: but of "his character" I know nothing personally; I can only speak to his manners, and these have my warmest approbation. But

I never judge from manners, for I once had my pocket picked by the civilest gentleman I ever met with; and one of the mildest persons I ever saw was Ali Pacha. Of Mr. Bowles's "*character*" I will not do him the *injustice* to judge from the edition of Pope, if he prepared it heedlessly; nor the *justice*, should it be otherwise, because I would neither become a literary executioner, nor a personal one. Mr. Bowles the individual, and Mr. Bowles the editor, appear the two most opposite things imaginable.

"And he himself one —— antithesis."

I won't say "vile," because it is harsh; nor "mistaken," because it has two syllables too many: but every one must fill up the blank as he pleases.

What I saw of Mr. Bowles increased my surprise and regret that he should ever have lent his talents to such a task. If he had been a fool, there would have been some excuse for him; if he had been a needy or a bad man, his conduct would have been intelligible: but he is the opposite of all these; and thinking and feeling as I do of Pope, to me the whole thing is unaccountable. However, I

must call things by their right names. I cannot call his edition of Pope a "candid" work; and I still think that there is an affectation of that quality not only in those volumes, but in the pamphlets lately published.

"Why *yet* he doth *deny* his prisoners."

Mr. Bowles says, that "he has seen passages in his letters to Martha Blount which were never published by me, and I *hope never will* be by others; which are so *gross* as to imply the *grossest* licentiousness." Is this fair play? It may, or it may not be that such passages exist; and that Pope, who was not a monk, although a catholic, may have occasionally sinned in word and deed with woman in his youth; but is this a sufficient ground for such a sweeping denunciation? Where is the unmarried Englishman of a certain rank of life, who (provided he has not taken orders) has not to reproach himself between the ages of sixteen and thirty with far more licentiousness than has ever yet been traced to Pope? Pope lived in the public eye from his youth upwards; he had all the dunces of his own time for his enemies, and, I am sorry to say,

some, who have not the apology of dulness for detraction, since his death; and yet to what do all their accumulated hints and charges amount?—to an equivocal *liaison* with Martha Blount, which might arise as much from his infirmities as from his passions, to a hopeless flirtation with Lady Mary W. Montagu; to a story of Cibber's; and to two or three coarse passages in his works. *Who* could come forth clearer from an invidious inquest on a life of fifty-six years? Why are we to be officiously reminded of such passages in his letters, provided that they exist. Is Mr. Bowles aware to what such rummaging among "letters" and "stories" might lead? I have myself seen a collection of letters of another eminent, nay, pre-eminent, deceased poet, so abominably gross, and elaborately coarse, that I do not believe that they could be paralleled in our language. What is more strange, is, that some of these are couched as *postscripts* to his serious and sentimental letters, to which are tacked either a piece of prose, or some verses, of the most hyperbolical indecency. He himself says, that if "obscenity (using a much coarser word) be the sin against the Holy Ghost, he most certainly can-

not be saved." These letters are in existence, and have been seen by many besides myself; but would his *editor* have been "*candid*" in even alluding to them? Nothing would have even provoked *me*, an indifferent spectator, to allude to them, but this further attempt at the depreciation of Pope.

What should we say to an editor of Addison, who cited the following passage from Walpole's letters to George Montagu? "Dr. Young has published a new book, &c. Mr. Addison sent for the young Earl of Warwick, as he was dying, to show him in what peace a Christian could die; unluckily he died of *brandy:* nothing makes a Christian die in peace like being maudlin! but don't say this in Gath where you are." Suppose the editor introduced it with this preface: "One circumstance is mentioned by Horace Walpole, which, if true, was indeed *flagitious*. Walpole informs Montagu that Addison sent for the young Earl of Warwick, when dying, to show him in what peace a Christian could die; but unluckily he died drunk, &c. &c." Now, although there might occur on the subsequent, or on the same page, a faint show of disbelief, seasoned with the expression of

"the *same candour*" (the *same* exactly as throughout the book), I should say that this editor was either foolish or false to his trust; such a story ought not to have been admitted, except for one brief mark of crushing indignation, unless it were *completely proved.* Why the words "*if true?*" that "*if*" is not a peace-maker. Why talk of "Cibber's testimony" to his licentiousness? to what does this amount? that Pope when very young was *once* decoyed by some noblemen and the player to a house of carnal recreation. Mr. Bowles was not always a clergyman; and when he was a very young man, was he never seduced into as much? If I were in the humour for story-telling, and relating little anecdotes, I could tell a much better story of Mr. Bowles than Cibber's, upon much better authority, viz. that of Mr. Bowles himself. It was not related by *him* in my presence, but in that of a third person, whom Mr. Bowles names oftener than once in the course of his replies. This gentleman related it to me as a humorous and witty anecdote; and so it was, whatever its other characteristics might be. But should I, for a youthful frolic, brand Mr. Bowles with a "libertine sort of

love," or with "licentiousness?" is he the less now a pious or a good man, for not having always been a priest? No such thing; I am willing to believe him a good man, almost as good a man as Pope, but no better.

The truth is, that in these days the grand "*primum mobile*" of England is *cant;* cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral; but always cant, multiplied through all the varieties of life. It is the fashion, and while it lasts will be too powerful for those who can only exist by taking the tone of the time. I say *cant*, because it is a thing of words, without the smallest influence upon human actions; the English being no wiser, no better, and much poorer, and more divided amongst themselves, as well as far less moral, than they were before the prevalence of this verbal decorum. This hysterical horror of poor Pope's not very well ascertained, and never fully proved amours, (for even Cibber owns that he prevented the somewhat perilous adventure in which Pope was embarking), sounds very virtuous in a controversial pamphlet; but all men of the world who know what life is, or at least what it was to them in their youth, must laugh at such a

ludicrous foundation of the charge of "a libertine sort of love;" while the more serious will look upon those who bring forward such charges upon an insulated fact, as fanatics or hypocrites, perhaps both. The two are sometimes compounded in a happy mixture.

Mr. Octavius Gilchrist speaks rather irreverently of a "second tumbler of *hot* white-wine negus." What does he mean? Is there any harm in negus? or is it the worse for being *hot?* or does Mr. Bowles drink negus? I had a better opinion of him. I hoped that whatever wine he drank was neat; or at least, that like the ordinary in Jonathan Wild, "he preferred *punch*, the rather as there was nothing against it in Scripture." I should be sorry to believe that Mr. Bowles was fond of negus; it is such a "candid" liquor, so like a wishy-washy compromise between the passion for wine and the propriety of water. But different writers have divers tastes. Judge Blackstone composed his "Commentaries" (he was a poet too in his youth) with a bottle of port before him. Addison's conversation was not good for much till he had taken a similar dose. Perhaps the prescription of these two great men was not inferior to the very dif-

ferent one of a soi-disant poet of this day, who, after wandering amongst the hills, returns, goes to bed, and dictates his verses, being fed by a bystander with bread and butter during the operation.

I now come to Mr. Bowles's "invariable principles of poetry." These Mr. Bowles and some of his correspondents pronounce "unanswerable;" and they are "unanswered," at least by Campbell, who seems to have been astounded by the title. The sultan of the time being offered to ally himself to a king of France, because "he hated the word league;" which proves that the Padishan understood French. Mr. Campbell has no need of my alliance, nor shall I presume to offer it; but I do hate that word "*invariable.*" What is there of *human*, be it poetry, philosophy, wit, wisdom, science, power, glory, mind, matter, life, or death, which is "*invariable?*" Of course I put things divine out of the question. Of all arrogant baptisms of a book, this title to a pamphlet appears the most complacently conceited. It is Mr. Campbell's part to answer the contents of this performance, and especially to vindicate his own "Ship," which Mr. Bowles most triumphantly

proclaims to have struck to his very first fire.

> "Quoth he, there was a *Ship;*
> Now let me go, thou grey-haired loon,
> Or my staff shall make thee skip."

It is no affair of mine, but having once begun (certainly not by my own wish, but called upon by the frequent recurrence to my name in the pamphlets), I am like an Irishman in a "row," "any body's customer." I shall therefore say a word or two on the "Ship."

Mr. Bowles asserts that Campbell's "Ship of the Line" derives all its poetry not from "*art*," but from "*nature*." "Take away the waves, the winds, the sun, &c. &c. *one* will become a stripe of blue bunting; and the other a piece of coarse canvas on three tall poles." Very true; take away the "waves," "the winds," and there will be no ship at all, not only for poetical, but for any other purpose; and take away "the sun," and we must read Mr. Bowles's pamphlet by candle-light. But the "poetry" of the "Ship" does *not* depend on "the waves," &c.; on the contrary, the "Ship of the Line" confers its own poetry upon the waters, and heightens *theirs*. I do not deny, that the "waves and winds," and above all "the sun," are highly poetical;

we know it to our cost, by the many descriptions of them in verse: but if the waves bore only the foam upon their bosoms, if the winds wafted only the sea-weed to the shore, if the sun shone neither upon pyramids, nor fleets, nor fortresses, would its beams be equally poetical? I think not: the poetry is at least reciprocal. Take away "the Ship of the Line" "swinging round" the "calm water," and the calm water becomes a somewhat monotonous thing to look at, particularly if not transparently *clear;* witness the thousands who pass by without looking on it at all. What was it attracted the thousands to the launch? they might have seen the poetical "calm water" at Wapping, or in the "London Dock," or in the Paddington Canal, or in a horse-pond, or in a slop-basin, or in any other vase. They might have heard the poetical winds howling through the chinks of a pigsty, or the garret window; they might have seen the sun shining on a footman's livery, or on a brass warming-pan; but could the "calm water," or the "wind," or the "sun," make all, or any of these "poetical?" I think not. Mr. Bowles admits "the Ship" to be poetical, but only from those accessaries: now if they *confer* poetry so as to make one thing poetical, they

would make other things poetical; the more so, as Mr. Bowles calls a "ship of the line" without them, that is to say, its "masts and sails and streamers," "blue bunting," and "coarse canvas," and "tall poles." So they are; and porcelain is clay, and man is dust, and flesh is grass, and yet the two latter at least are the subjects of much poesy.

Did Mr. Bowles ever gaze upon the sea? I presume that he has, at least upon a sea-piece. Did any painter ever paint the sea *only*, without the addition of a ship, boat, wreck, or some such adjunct? Is the sea itself a more attractive, a more moral, a more poetical object, with or without a vessel, breaking its vast but fatiguing monotony? Is a storm more poetical without a ship? or, in the poem of the Shipwreck, is it the storm or the ship which most interests? both *much* undoubtedly; but without the vessel, what should we care for the tempest? It would sink into mere descriptive poetry, which in itself was never esteemed a high order of that art.

I look upon myself as entitled to talk of naval matters, at least to poets:—with the exception of Walter Scott, Moore, and

Southey, perhaps, who have been voyagers, I have *swam* more miles than all the rest of them together now living ever *sailed*, and have lived for months and months on shipboard; and, during the whole period of my life abroad, have scarcely ever passed a month out of sight of the ocean: besides being brought up from two years till ten on the brink of it. I recollect, when anchored off Cape Sigeum in 1810, in an English frigate, a violent squall coming on at sunset, so violent as to make us imagine that the ship would part cable, or drive from her anchorage. Mr. Hobhouse and myself, and some officers, had been up the Dardanelles to Abydos, and were just returned in time. The aspect of a storm in the Archipelago is as poetical as need be, the sea being particularly short, dashing, and dangerous, and the navigation intricate and broken by the isles and currents. Cape Sigeum, the tumuli of the Troad, Lemnos, Tenedos, all added to the associations of the time. But what seemed the most "*poetical*" of all at the moment, were the numbers (about two hundred) of Greek and Turkish craft, which were obliged to "cut and run" before the wind, from their unsafe anchorage, some

for Tenedos, some for other isles, some for the main, and some it might be for eternity. The sight of these little scudding vessels, darting over the foam in the twilight, now appearing and now disappearing between the waves in the cloud of night, with their peculiarly *white* sails, (the Levant sails not being of "*coarse canvas*," but of white cotton), skimming along as quickly, but less safely than the sea-mews which hovered over them; their evident distress, their reduction to fluttering specks in the distance, their crowded succession, their *littleness*, as contending with the giant element, which made our stout forty-four's *teak* timbers, (she was built in India), creak again; their aspect and their motion, all struck me as something far more "poetical" than the mere broad, brawling, shipless sea, and the sullen winds, could possibly have been without them.

The Euxine is a noble sea to look upon, and the port of Constantinople the most beautiful of harbours, and yet I cannot but think that the twenty sail of the line, some of one hundred and forty guns, rendered it more "poetical" by day in the sun, and by night perhaps still more, for the Turks illuminate their vessels of war in a manner the

most picturesque, and yet all this is *artificial*. As for the Euxine, I stood upon the Symplegades—I stood by the broken altar still exposed to the winds upon one of them—I felt all the "*poetry*" of the situation, as I repeated the first lines of Medea; but would not that "poetry" have been heightened by the *Argo?* It was so even by the appearance of any merchant vessel arriving from Odessa. But Mr. Bowles says, "why bring your ship off the stocks?" for no reason that I know, except that ships are built to be launched. The water, &c. undoubtedly HEIGHTENS the poetical associations, but it does not *make* them; and the ship amply repays the obligation: they aid each other; the water is more poetical with the ship—the ship less so without the water. But even a ship, laid up in dock, is a grand and a poetical sight. Even an old boat, keel upwards, wrecked upon the barren sand, is a "poetical" object; (and Wordsworth, who made a poem about a washing-tub and a blind boy, may tell you so as well as I), whilst a long extent of sand and unbroken water, without the boat, would be as like dull prose as any pamphlet lately published.

What makes the poetry in the image of

the "*marble waste of Tadmor*," or Grainger's "Ode to Solitude," so much admired by Johnson? Is it the "*marble*," or the "*waste*," the *artificial* or the *natural* object? The "waste" is like all other *wastes;* but the "*marble*" of Palmyra makes the poetry of the passage as of the place.

The beautiful but barren Hymettus, the whole coast of Attica, her hills and mountains, Pentelicus, Anchesmus, Philopappus, &c. &c., are in themselves poetical, and would be so if the name of Athens, of Athenians, and her very ruins, were swept from the earth. But am I to be told that the "nature" of Attica would be *more* poetical without the "art" of the Acropolis? of the Temple of Theseus? and of the still all Greek and glorious monuments of her exquisitely artificial genius? Ask the traveller what strikes him as most poetical, the Parthenon, or the rock on which it stands? The COLUMNS of Cape Colonna, or the Cape itself? The rocks at the foot of it, or the recollection that Falconer's *ship* was bulged upon them? There are a thousand rocks and capes, far more picturesque than those of the Acropolis and Cape Sunium in themselves; what are they to a thousand scenes in the wilder parts of

Greece, of Asia Minor, Switzerland, or even of Cintra in Portugal, or to many scenes of Italy, and the Sierras of Spain? But it is the "*art*," the columns, the temples, the wrecked vessel, which give them their antique and their modern poetry, and not the spots themselves. Without them, the *spots* of earth would be unnoticed and unknown; buried, like Babylon and Nineveh, in indistinct confusion, without poetry, as without existence; but to whatever spot of earth these ruins were transported, if they were *capable* of transportation, like the obelisk, and the sphinx, and the Memnon's head, *there* they would still exist in the perfection of their beauty, and in the pride of their poetry. I opposed, and will ever oppose, the robbery of ruins from Athens, to instruct the English in sculpture; but why did I do so? The *ruins* are as poetical in Piccadilly as they were in the Parthenon; but the Parthenon and its rock are less so without them. Such is the poetry of art.

Mr. Bowles contends again that the pyramids of Egypt are poetical, because of "the association with boundless deserts," and that a "pyramid of the same dimensions" would not be sublime in "Lincoln's Inn Fields:"

not *so* poetical certainly; but take away the "pyramids," and what is the "*desert?*" Take away Stone-henge from Salisbury plain, and it is nothing more than Hounslow heath, or any other uninclosed down. It appears to me that St. Peter's, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Palatine, the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Venus di Medicis, the Hercules, the dying Gladiator, the Moses of Michel Angelo, and all the higher works of Canova, (I have already spoken of those of ancient Greece, still extant in that country, or transported to England), are as *poetical* as Mont Blanc or Mount Ætna, perhaps still more so, as they are direct manifestations of mind, and *presuppose* poetry in their very conception; and have moreover, as being such, a something of actual life, which cannot belong to any part of inanimate nature, unless we adopt the system of Spinosa, that the world is the Deity. There can be nothing more poetical in its aspect than the city of Venice: does this depend upon the sea, or the canals?—

"The dirt and sea-weed whence proud Venice rose?"

Is it the canal which runs between the palace and the prison, or the "Bridge of Sighs,"

which connects them, that render it poetical? Is it the "Canal Grande," or the Rialto which arches it, the churches which tower over it, the palaces which line, and the gondolas which glide over the waters, that render this city more poetical than Rome itself? Mr. Bowles will say perhaps, that the Rialto is but marble, the palaces and churches only stone, and the gondolas a "coarse" black cloth, thrown over some planks of carved wood, with a shining bit of fantastically formed iron at the prow, "*without*" the water. And I tell him that without these, the water would be nothing but a clay-coloured ditch, and whoever says the contrary, deserves to be at the bottom of that, where Pope's heroes are embraced by the mud nymphs. There would be nothing to make the canal of Venice more poetical than that of Paddington, were it not for the artificial adjuncts above-mentioned, although it is a perfectly natural canal, formed by the sea, and the innumerable islands which constitute the site of this extraordinary city.

The very Cloaca of Tarquin at Rome are as poetical as Richmond Hill; many will think more so: take away Rome, and leave the Tibur and the seven hills, in the nature of Evander's time. Let Mr. Bowles, or Mr.

Wordsworth, or Mr. Southey, or any of the other "naturals," make a poem upon them, and then see which is most poetical, their production, or the commonest guide-book, which tells you the road from St. Peter's to the Coliseum, and informs you what you will see by the way. The ground interests in Virgil, because it *will* be *Rome*, and not because it is Evander's rural domain.

Mr. Bowles then proceeds to press Homer into his service, in answer to a remark of Mr. Campbell's, that "Homer was a great describer of works of art." Mr. Bowles contends that all his great power, even in this, depends upon their connexion with nature. The "shield of Achilles derives its poetical interest from the subjects described on it." And from what does the *spear* of Achilles derive its interest? and the helmet and the mail worn by Patroclus, and the celestial armour, and the very brazen greaves of the well-booted Greeks? Is it solely from the legs, and the back, and the breast, and the human body, which they enclose? In that case, it would have been more poetical to have made them fight naked; and Gulley and Gregson, as being nearer to a state of nature,

are more poetical boxing in a pair of drawers than Hector and Achilles in radiant armour, and with heroic weapons.

Instead of the clash of helmets, and the rushing of chariots, and the whizzing of spears, and the glancing of swords, and the cleaving of shields, and the piercing of breast-plates, why not represent the Greeks and Trojans like two savage tribes, tugging and tearing, and kicking, and biting, and gnashing, foaming, grinning, and gouging, in all the poetry of martial nature, unincumbered with gross, prosaic, artificial arms, an equal superfluity to the natural warrior, and his natural poet. Is there any thing unpoetical in Ulysses striking the horses of Rhesus with *his bow*, (having forgotten his thong), or would Mr. Bowles have had him kick them with his foot, or smack them with his hand, as being more unsophisticated?

In Gray's Elegy, is there an image more striking than his "shapeless sculpture?" Of sculpture in general, it may be observed, that it is more poetical than nature itself, inasmuch as it represents and bodies forth that ideal beauty and sublimity which is never to be found in actual nature. This at least is the

general opinion. But, always excepting the Venus di Medicis, I differ from that opinion, at least as far as regards female beauty; for the head of Lady Charlemont, (when I first saw her nine years ago), seemed to possess all that sculpture could require for its ideal. I recollect seeing something of the same kind in the head of an Albanian girl, who was actually employed in mending a road in the mountains, and in some Greek, and one or two Italian, faces. But of *sublimity*, I have never seen any thing in human nature at all to approach the expression of sculpture, either in the Apollo, the Moses, or other of the sterner works of ancient or modern art.

Let us examine a little further this "babble of green fields" and of bare nature in general as superior to artificial imagery, for the poetical purposes of the fine arts. In landscape painting, the great artist does not give you a literal copy of a country, but he invents and composes one. Nature, in her actual aspect, does not furnish him with such existing scenes as he requires. Even where he presents you with some famous city, or celebrated scene from mountain or other nature, it must be taken from some particular point

of view, and with such light, and shade, and distance, &c. as serve not only to heighten its beauties, but to shadow its deformities. The poetry of Nature alone, *exactly* as she appears, is not sufficient to bear him out. The very sky of his painting is not the *portrait* of the sky of Nature; it is a composition of different *skies*, observed at different times, and not the whole copied from any *particular* day. And why? Because Nature is not lavish of her beauties; they are widely scattered, and occasionally displayed, to be selected with care, and gathered with difficulty.

Of sculpture I have just spoken. It is the great scope of the sculptor to heighten Nature into heroic beauty, *i. e.* in plain English, to surpass his model. When Canova forms a statue, he takes a limb from one, a hand from another, a feature from a third, and a shape, it may be, from a fourth, probably at the same time improving upon all, as the Greek of old did in embodying his Venus.

Ask a portrait painter to describe his agonies in accommodating the faces with which Nature and his sitters have crowded his painting-room to the principles of his art: with the

exception of perhaps ten faces in as many millions, there is not one which he can venture to give without shading much and adding more. Nature, exactly, simply, barely Nature, will make no great artist of any kind, and least of all a poet—the most artificial, perhaps, of all artists in his very essence. With regard to natural imagery, the poets are obliged to take some of their best illustrations from *art*. You say that a "fountain is as clear or clearer than *glass*," to express its beauty—

"O fons Bandusiæ, splendidior vitro!"

In the speech of Mark Antony, the body of Cæsar is displayed, but so also is his *mantle*:

"You all do know this *mantle*," &c.

— — —

"Look! in this place ran Cassius' *dagger* through."

If the poet had said that Cassius had run his *fist* through the rent of the mantle, it would have had more of Mr. Bowles's "nature" to help it; but the artificial *dagger* is more poetical than any natural *hand* without it. In the sublime of sacred poetry, "Who is this that cometh from Edom? with *dyed garments* from Bozrah?" Would "the comer" be poetical

without his "*dyed garments?*" which strike and startle the spectator, and identify the approaching object.

The mother of Sisera is represented listening for the "*wheels of his chariot.*" Solomon, in his Song, compares the nose of his beloved to "a tower," which to us appears an eastern exaggeration. If he had said, that her stature was like that of a "tower's," it would have been as poetical as if he had compared her to a tree.

"The virtuous Marcia *towers* above her sex"

is an instance of an artificial image to express a *moral* superiority. But Solomon, it is probable, did not compare his beloved's nose to a "tower" on account of its length, but of its symmetry; and making allowance for eastern hyperbole, and the difficulty of finding a discreet image for a female nose in nature, it is perhaps as good a figure as any other.

Art is *not* inferior to nature for poetical purposes. What makes a regiment of soldiers a more noble object of view than the same mass of mob? Their arms, their dresses, their banners, and the *art* and artificial symmetry of their position and movements. A Highlander's

plaid, a Mussulman's turban, and a Roman toga, are more poetical than the tattooed or untattooed buttocks of a New Sandwich savage, although they were described by William Wordsworth himself like the "idiot in his glory."

I have seen as many mountains as most men, and more fleets than the generality of landsmen; and to my mind, a large convoy with a few sail of the line to conduct them, is as noble and as poetical a prospect as all that inanimate nature can produce. I prefer the "mast of some great ammiral," with all its tackle, to the Scotch fir or the alpine tannen; and think that *more* poetry *has been* made out of it. In what does the infinite superiority of "Falconer's Shipwreck" over all other shipwrecks consist? In his admirable application of the terms of his art; in a poet-sailor's description of the sailor's fate. These *very terms*, by his application, make the strength and reality of his poem. Why? because he was a poet, and in the hands of a poet *art* will not be found less ornamental than nature. It is precisely in general nature, and in stepping out of his element, that Falconer fails; where he digresses to speak

of ancient Greece, and "such branches of learning."

In Dyer's Grongar Hill, upon which his fame rests, the very appearance of nature herself is moralized into an artificial image:

> "Thus is nature's *vesture* wrought,
> To instruct our wandering thought;
> Thus she *dresses green and gay*,
> To disperse our cares away."

And here also we have the telescope; the misuse of which, from Milton, has rendered Mr. Bowles so triumphant over Mr. Campbell:

> "So we mistake the future's face,
> Eyed through Hope's deluding *glass*."

And here a word en passant to Mr. Campbell:

> "As yon summits, soft and fair,
> Clad in colours of the air,
> Which to those who journey near
> Barren, brown, and rough appear,
> Still we tread the same coarse way—
> The present 's still a cloudy day."

Is not this the original of the far-famed—

> "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
> And robes the mountain in its azure hue?"

To return once more to the sea. Let any

one look on the long wall of Malamocco, which curbs the Adriatic, and pronounce between the sea and its master. Surely that Roman work, (I mean *Roman* in conception and performance), which says to the ocean, "thus far shalt thou come, and no further," and is obeyed, is not less sublime and poetical than the angry waves which vainly break beneath it.

Mr. Bowles makes the chief part of a ship's poesy depend upon the "*wind:*" then why is a ship under sail more poetical than a hog in a high wind? The hog is all nature, the ship is all art, "coarse canvas," "blue bunting," and "tall poles;" both are violently acted upon by the wind, tossed here and there, to and fro, and yet nothing but excess of hunger could make me look upon the pig as the more poetical of the two, and then only in the shape of a griskin.

Will Mr. Bowles tell us that the poetry of an aqueduct consists in the *water* which it conveys? Let him look on that of Justinian, on those of Rome, Constantinople, Lisbon, and Elvas, or even at the remains of that in Attica.

We are asked, "what makes the venerable

towers of Westminster Abbey more poetical, as objects, than the tower for the manufactory of patent shot, surrounded by the same scenery?" I will answer—the *architecture*. Turn Westminster Abbey, or Saint Paul's, into a powder magazine, their poetry, as objects, remains the same; the Parthenon was actually converted into one by the Turks, during Morosini's Venetian siege, and part of it destroyed in consequence. Cromwell's dragoons stalled their steeds in Worcester cathedral; was it less poetical as an object than before? Ask a foreigner on his approach to London, what strikes him as the most poetical of the towers before him: he will point out Saint Paul's and Westminster Abbey, without, perhaps, knowing the names or associations of either, and pass over the "tower for patent shot," not that for any thing he knows to the contrary, it might not be the mausoleum of a monarch, or a Waterloo column, or a Trafalgar monument, but because its architecture is obviously inferior.

To the question, "whether the description of a game of cards be as poetical, supposing the execution of the artists equal, as a description of a walk in a forest?" it may be answered,

that the *materials* are certainly not equal; but that "the *artist*," who has rendered the "game of cards poetical," is *by far the greater* of the two. But all this "ordering" of poets is purely arbitrary on the part of Mr. Bowles. There may or may not be, in fact, different "orders" of poetry, but the poet is always ranked according to his execution, and not according to his branch of the art.

Tragedy is one of the highest presumed orders. Hughes has written a tragedy, and a very successful one; Fenton another; and Pope none. Did any man, however,—will even Mr. Bowles himself, rank Hughes and Fenton as poets above *Pope?* Was even Addison, (the author of Cato), or Rowe, (one of the higher order of dramatists as far as success goes), or Young, or even Otway and Southerne, ever raised for a moment to the same rank with Pope in the estimation of the reader or the critic, before his death or since? If Mr. Bowles will contend for classifications of this kind, let him recollect that descriptive poetry has been ranked as among the lowest branches of the art, and description as a mere ornament, but which should never form "the subject" of a poem. The Italians, with the

most poetical language, and the most fastidious taste in Europe, possess now five *great* poets, they say, Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, and lastly Alfieri; and whom do they esteem one of the highest of these, and some of them the very highest? Petrarch the *sonneteer:* it is true that some of his Canzoni are *not less* esteemed, but *not* more; who ever dreams of his Latin Africa?

Were Petrarch to be ranked according to the "order" of his compositions, where would the best of sonnets place him? with Dante and the others? no; but, as I have before said, the poet who *executes* best, is the highest, whatever his department, and will ever be so rated in the world's esteem.

Had Gray written nothing but his Elegy, high as he stands, I am not sure that he would not stand higher; it is the corner-stone of his glory: without it, his odes would be insufficient for his fame. The depreciation of Pope is partly founded upon a false idea of the dignity of his order of poetry, to which he has partly contributed by the ingenuous boast,

> "That not in fancy's maze he wandered long,
> But *stoop'd* to truth, and moralized his song."

He should have written "rose to truth." In my mind the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry, as the highest of all earthly objects must be moral truth. Religion does not make a part of my subject; it is something beyond human powers, and has failed in all human hands except Milton's and Dante's, and even Dante's powers are involved in his delineation of human passions, though in supernatural circumstances. What made Socrates the greatest of men? His moral truth—his ethics. What proved Jesus Christ the Son of God hardly less than his miracles? His moral precepts. And if ethics have made a philosopher the first of men, and have not been disdained as an adjunct to his Gospel by the Deity himself, are we to be told that ethical poetry, or didactic poetry, or by whatever name you term it, whose object is to make men better and wiser, is not the *very first order* of poetry; and are we to be told this too by one of the priesthood? It requires more mind, more wisdom, more power, than all the "forests" that ever were "walked" for their "description," and all the epics that ever were founded upon fields of battle. The Georgics are indisputably, and, I believe, *undisputedly* even

a finer poem than the Æneid. Virgil knew this; he did not order *them* to be burnt.

"The proper study of mankind is man."

It is the fashion of the day to lay great stress upon what they call "imagination" and "invention," the two commonest of qualities: an Irish peasant with a little whiskey in his head will imagine and invent more than would furnish forth a modern poem. If Lucretius had not been spoiled by the Epicurean system, we should have had a far superior poem to any now in existence. As mere poetry, it is the first of Latin poems. What then has ruined it? His ethics. Pope has not this defect; his moral is as pure as his poetry is glorious.

In speaking of artificial objects, I have omitted to touch upon one which I will now mention. Cannon may be presumed to be as highly poetical as art can make her objects. Mr. Bowles will, perhaps, tell me that this is because they resemble that grand natural article of sound in heaven, and simile upon earth—thunder. I shall be told triumphantly, that Milton made sad work with his artillery, when he armed his devils there-

withal. He did so; and this artificial object must have had much of the sublime to attract his attention for such a conflict. He *has* made an absurd use of it; but the absurdity consists not in using *cannon* against the angels of God, but any *material* weapon. The thunder of the clouds would have been as ridiculous and vain in the hands of the devils, as the "villanous saltpetre:" the angels were as impervious to the one as to the other. The thunderbolts become sublime in the hands of the Almighty not as such, but because *he* deigns to use them as a means of repelling the rebel spirits; but no one can attribute their defeat to this grand piece of natural electricity: the Almighty willed, and they fell; his word would have been enough; and Milton is as absurd, (and in fact, *blasphemous*), in putting material lightnings into the hands of the Godhead, as in giving him hands at all.

The artillery of the demons was but the first step of his mistake, the thunder the next, and it is a step lower. It would have been fit for Jove, but not for Jehovah. The subject altogether was essentially unpoetical; he

has made more of it than another could, but it is beyond him and all men.

In a portion of his reply, Mr. Bowles asserts that Pope "envied Phillips" because he quizzed his pastorals in the Guardian, in that most admirable model of irony, his paper on the subject. If there was any thing enviable about Phillips, it could hardly be his pastorals. They were despicable, and Pope expressed his contempt. If Mr. Fitzgerald published a volume of sonnets, or a "Spirit of Discovery," or a "Missionary," and Mr. Bowles wrote in any periodical journal an ironical paper upon them, would this be "envy?" The authors of the "Rejected Addresses" have ridiculed the sixteen or twenty "first living poets" of the day; but do they "envy" them? "Envy" writhes, it don't laugh. The authors of the Rejected Addresses may despise some, but they can hardly "envy" any of the persons whom they have parodied; and Pope could have no more envied Phillips than he did Welsted, or Theobalds, or Smedley, or any other given hero of the Dunciad. He could not have envied him, even had he himself *not* been the greatest

poet of his age. Did Mr. Ings "*envy*" Mr. Phillips when he asked him, "how came your Pyrrhus to drive oxen and say, I am *goaded* on by love?" This question silenced poor Phillips; but it no more proceeded from "envy" than did Pope's ridicule. Did he envy Swift? Did he envy Bolingbroke? Did he envy Gay the unparalleled success of his "Beggar's Opera?" We may be answered that these were his friends—true; but does *friendship* prevent *envy?* Study the first woman you meet with, or the first scribbler, let Mr. Bowles himself (whom I acquit fully of such an odious quality), study some of his own poetical intimates: the most envious man I ever heard of is a poet, and a high one; besides, it is an *universal* passion. Goldsmith envied not only the puppets for their dancing, and broke his shins in the attempt at rivalry, but was seriously angry because two pretty women received more attention than he did. *This is envy;* but where does Pope show a sign of the passion? In that case Dryden envied the hero of his Mac Flecknoe. Mr. Bowles compares, when and where he can, Pope with Cowper (the same Cowper whom in his edition of Pope he laughs at for his attach-

ment to an old woman, Mrs. Unwin; search and you will find it; I remember the passage, though not the page); in particular he re-quotes Cowper's Dutch delineation of a wood, drawn up like a seedsman's catalogue *, with

* I will submit to Mr. Bowles's own judgment a passage from another poem of Cowper's, to be compared with the same writer's Sylvan Sampler. In the lines to Mary,

" Thy *needles*, once a shining store,
For my sake restless heretofore,
Now rust disused, and shine no more,
My Mary,"

contain a simple, household, " *indoor*," artificial, and ordinary image; I refer Mr. Bowles to the stanza, and ask if these three lines about " *needles*" are not worth all the boasted twaddling about trees, so triumphantly re-quoted? and yet in *fact* what do they convey? A homely collection of images and ideas, associated with the darning of stockings, and the hemming of shirts, and the mending of breeches; but will any one deny that they are eminently poetical and pathetic as addressed by Cowper to his nurse? The trash of trees reminds me of a saying of Sheridan's. Soon after the " Rejected Address" scene in 1812, I met Sheridan. In the course of dinner, he said, " Lord Byron, did you know that, amongst the writers of addresses, was Whitbread himself?" I answered by an inquiry of what sort of an address he had made. " Of that," replied Sheridan, " I remember little, except that there was a *Phœnix* in it." " A Phœnix!! Well, how did he describe it?" " *Like a poulterer*;" answered Sheridan; " it was green, and yellow, and red, and blue: he did not let us off for a single feather."

an affected imitation of Milton's style, as burlesque as the "Splendid Shilling." These two writers, for Cowper is no poet, come into comparison in one great work, the translation of Homer. Now, with all the great, and manifest, and manifold, and reproved, and acknowledged, and uncontroverted faults of Pope's translation, and all the scholarship,

And just such as this poulterer's account of a phœnix si Cowper's a stick-picker's detail of a wood, with all its petty minutiæ of this, that, and the other.

One more poetical instance of the power of art, and even its *superiority* over nature, in poetry; and I have done:—the bust of *Antinous!* Is there any thing in nature like this marble, excepting the Venus? Can there be more *poetry* gathered into existence than in that wonderful creation of perfect beauty? But the poetry of this bust is in no respect derived from nature, nor from any association of moral exaltedness; for what is there in common with moral nature, and the male minion of Adrian? The very execution is *not natural*, but *super*-natural, or rather *super-artificial*, for nature has never done so much.

Away, then, with this cant about nature, and "invariable principles of poetry!" A great artist will make a block of stone as sublime as a mountain, and a good poet can imbue a pack of cards with more poetry than inhabits the forests of America. It is the business and the proof of a poet to give the lie to the proverb, and sometimes to "*make a silken purse out of a sow's ear;*" and to conclude with another homely proverb, "a good workman will not find fault with his tools."

and pains, and time, and trouble, and blank verse of the other, who can ever read Cowper? and who will ever lay down Pope, unless for the original? Pope's was "not Homer, it was Spondanus;" but Cowper's is not Homer either, it is not even Cowper. As a child I first read Pope's Homer with a rapture which no subsequent work could ever afford, and children are not the worst judges of their own language. As a boy I read Homer in the original, as we have all done, some of us by force, and a few by favour; under which description I come is nothing to the purpose, it is enough that I read him. As a man I have tried to read Cowper's version, and I found it impossible. Has any human reader ever succeeded?

And now that we have heard the Catholic reproached with envy, duplicity, licentiousness, avarice—what was the Calvinist? He attempted the most atrocious of crimes in the Christian code, viz. suicide—and why? because he was to be examined whether he was fit for an office which he seems to wish to have made a sinecure. His connexion with Mrs. Unwin was pure enough, for the old lady was devout, and he was deranged; but

why then is the infirm and then elderly Pope to be reproved for his connexion with Martha Blount; Cowper was the almoner of Mrs. Throgmorton; but Pope's charities were his own, and they were noble and extensive, far beyond his fortune's warrant. Pope was the tolerant yet steady adherent of the most bigoted of sects; and Cowper the most bigoted and despondent sectary that ever anticipated damnation to himself or others. Is this harsh? I know it is, and I do not assert it as my opinion of Cowper *personally*, but to *show what might* be said, with just as great an appearance of truth and candour, as all the odium which has been accumulated upon Pope in similar speculations. Cowper was a good man, and lived at a fortunate time for his works.

Mr. Bowles, apparently not relying entirely upon his own arguments, has in person or by proxy brought forward the names of Southey and Moore. Mr. Southey "agrees entirely with Mr. Bowles in his *invariable* principles of poetry." The least that Mr. Bowles can do in return is to approve the "invariable principles of Mr. Southey." I should have thought that the word "*invariable*" might have stuck

in Southey's throat, like Macbeth's "Amen!" I am sure it did in mine, and I am not the least consistent of the two, at least as a voter. Moore (*et tu, Brute!*) also approves, and a Mr. J. Scott. There is a letter also of two lines from a gentleman in asterisks, who, it seems, is a poet of "the highest rank"—who *can* this be? not my friend, Sir Walter, surely. Campbell it can't be; Rogers it won't be.

"You have *hit the nail in* the head, and * * * * [Pope, I presume] *on* the head also."

I *remain* yours, affectionately,

(Four *Asterisks.*)

And in asterisks let him remain. Whoever this person may be, he deserves, for such a judgment of Midas, that "the nail" which Mr. Bowles has "hit *in* the head" should be driven through his own ears; I am sure that they are long enough.

The attempt of the poetical populace of the present day to obtain an ostracism against Pope is as easily accounted for as the Athenian's shell against Aristides; they are tired of hearing him always called "the Just."

They are also fighting for life; for if he maintains his station, they will reach their own by falling. They have raised a mosque by the side of a Grecian temple of the purest architecture; and, more barbarous than the barbarians from whose practice I have borrowed the figure, they are not contented with their own grotesque edifice, unless they destroy the prior and purely beautiful fabric which preceded, and which shames them and theirs for ever and ever. I shall be told that amongst those I *have* been (or it may be, still *am*) conspicuous—true, and I am ashamed of it. I *have* been amongst the builders of this Babel, attended by a confusion of tongues, but *never* amongst the envious destroyers of the classic temple of our predecessor. I have loved and honoured the fame and name of that illustrious and unrivalled man, far more than my own paltry renown, and the trashy jingle of the crowd of "Schools" and upstarts, who pretend to rival, or even surpass him. Sooner than a single leaf should be torn from his laurel, it were better that all which these men, and that I, as one of their set, have ever written, should

" Line trunks, clothe spice, or, fluttering in a row,
Befringe the rails of Bedlam, or Soho!"

There are those who will believe this, and those who will not. You, sir, know how far I am sincere, and whether my opinion, not only in the short work intended for publication, and in private letters which can never be published, has or has not been the same. I look upon this as the declining age of English poetry; no regard for others, no selfish feeling, can prevent me from seeing this, and expressing the truth. There can be no worse sign for the taste of the times than the depreciation of Pope. It would be better to receive for proof Mr. Cobbett's rough but strong attack upon Shakspeare and Milton, than to allow this smooth and "candid" undermining of the reputation of the most *perfect* of our poets, and the purest of our moralists. Of his power in the *passions*, in description, in the mock heroic, I leave others to descant. I take him on his strong ground, as an *ethical* poet: in the former none excel; in the mock heroic and the ethical, none equal him; and in my mind, the latter is the highest of all poetry, because it does that in *verse*,

which the greatest of men have wished to accomplish in prose. If the essence of poetry must be a *lie*, throw it to the dogs, or banish it from your republic, as Plato would have done. He who can reconcile poetry with truth and wisdom, is the only true "*poet*" in its real sense, "the *maker*," "the *creator*"—why must this mean the "liar," the "feigner," the "tale teller?" A man may make and create better things than these.

I shall not presume to say that Pope is as high a poet as Shakspeare and Milton, though his enemy, Warton, places him immediately under them. I would no more say this than I would assert in the mosque (once Saint Sophia's), that Socrates was a greater man than Mahomet. But if I say that he is very near them, it is no more than has been asserted of Burns, who is supposed

"To rival all but Shakspeare's name below."

I say nothing against this opinion. But of what "*order*," according to the poetical aristocracy, are Burns's poems? There are his *opus magnum*, "Tam O'Shanter," a *tale*, the Cotter's Saturday Night, a descriptive

sketch; some others in the same style; the rest are songs. So much for the *rank* of his *productions;* the *rank* of *Burns* is the very first of his art. Of Pope I have expressed my opinion elsewhere, as also of the effect which the present attempts at poetry have had upon our literature. If any great national or natural convulsion could or should overwhelm your country in such sort, as to sweep Great Britain from the kingdoms of the earth, and leave only that, after all the most living of human things, a *dead language*, to be studied and read, and imitated by the wise of future and far generations, upon foreign shores; if your literature should become the learning of mankind, divested of party cabals, temporary fashions, and national pride and prejudice; an Englishman, anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British Epic and Tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakspeare and Milton; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people. He is the moral poet of all civilization; and as such, let us hope that he will one day be the national poet of mankind. He is the only poet that never

shocks; the only poet whose *faultlessness* has been made his reproach. Cast your eye over his productions; consider their extent, and contemplate their variety:—pastoral, passion, mock-heroic, translation, satire, ethics,—all excellent, and often perfect. If his great charm be his *melody*, how comes it that foreigners adore him even in their diluted translations? But I have made this letter too long. Give my compliments to Mr. Bowles.

Yours ever, very truly,

BYRON.

To
John Murray, Esq.

Post Scriptum.—Long as this letter has grown, I find it necessary to append a postscript; if possible, a short one. Mr. Bowles denies that he has accused Pope of "a sordid money-getting passion;" but, he adds, "if I had ever done so, I should be glad to find any testimony that might show he was *not* so." This testimony he may find to his heart's content in Spence and elsewhere. First, there is Martha Blount, who, Mr. Bowles charitably says, "probably thought

he did not save enough for her as legatee." Whatever she *thought* upon this point, her words are in Pope's favour. Then there is Alderman Barber; see Spence's Anecdotes. There is Pope's cold answer to Halifax when he proposed a pension; his behaviour to Craggs and to Addison upon like occasions, and his own two lines—

> " And, thanks to Homer, since I live and thrive,
> Indebted to no prince or peer alive;"

written when princes would have been proud to pension, and peers to promote him, and when the whole army of dunces were in array against him, and would have been but too happy to deprive him of this boast of independence. But there is something a little more serious in Mr. Bowles's declaration, that he " *would* have spoken" of his " noble generosity to the outcast, Richard Savage," and other instances of a compassionate and generous heart, " *had they occurred to his recollection when he wrote.*" What! is it come to this? Does Mr. Bowles sit down to write a minute and laboured life and edition of a great poet? Does he anatomize his character,

moral and poetical? Does he present us with his faults and with his foibles? Does he sneer at his feelings, and doubt of his sincerity? Does he unfold his vanity and duplicity? and then omit the good qualities which might, in part, have "covered this multitude of sins?" and then plead that "*they did not occur to his recollection?*" Is this the frame of mind and of memory with which the illustrious dead are to be approached? If Mr. Bowles, who must have had access to all the means of refreshing his memory, did not recollect these facts, he is unfit for his task; but if he *did* recollect, and omit them, I know not what he is fit for, but I know what would be fit for him. Is the plea of "not recollecting" such prominent facts to be admitted? Mr. Bowles has been at a public school, and as I have been publicly educated also, I can sympathise with his predilection. When we were in the third form even, had we pleaded on the Monday morning, that we had not brought up the Saturday's exercise, because "we had forgotten it," what would have been the reply? And is an excuse, which would not be pardoned to a schoolboy, to pass current in a matter which so nearly concerns the fame of

the first poet of his age, if not of his country? If Mr. Bowles so readily forgets the virtues of others, why complain so grievously that others have a better memory for his own faults? They are but the faults of an author; while the virtues he omitted from his catalogue are essential to the justice due to a man.

Mr. Bowles appears indeed to be susceptible beyond the privilege of authorship. There is a plaintive dedication to Mr. Gifford, in which *he* is made responsible for all the articles of the Quarterly. Mr. Southey, it seems, "the most able and eloquent writer in that Review," approves of Mr. Bowles's publication. Now it seems to me the more impartial, that notwithstanding that the great writer of the Quarterly entertains opinions opposite to the able article on Spence, nevertheless that essay was permitted to appear. Is a review to be devoted to the opinions of any *one* man? Must it not vary according to circumstances, and according to the subjects to be criticised? I fear that writers must take the sweets and bitters of the public journals as they occur, and an author of so long a standing as Mr. Bowles might have

become accustomed to such incidents; he might be angry, but not astonished. I have been reviewed in the Quarterly almost as often as Mr. Bowles, and have had as pleasant things said, and some *as unpleasant*, as could well be pronounced. In the review of "The Fall of Jerusalem" it is stated, that I have devoted "my powers, &c. to the worst parts of Manicheism," which being interpreted, means that I worship the devil. Now, I have neither written a reply, nor complained to Gifford. I believe that I observed in a letter to you, that I thought "that the critic might have praised Milman without finding it necessary to abuse me;" but did I not add at the same time, or soon after (apropos, of the note in the book of Travels), that I would not, if it were even in my power, have a single line cancelled on my account in that nor in any other publication. Of course, I reserve to myself the privilege of response when necessary. Mr. Bowles seems in a whimsical state about the author of the article on Spence. You know very well that I am not in your confidence, nor in that of the conductor of the journal. The moment I saw that article, I was morally

certain that I knew the author "by his style." You will tell me that I do *not know* him: that is all as it should be; keep the secret, so shall I, though no one has ever entrusted it to me. He is not the person whom Mr. Bowles denounces. Mr. Bowles's extreme sensibility reminds me of a circumstance which occurred on board of a frigate in which I was a passenger and guest of the captain's for a considerable time. The surgeon on board, a very gentlemanly young man, and remarkably able in his profession, wore a *wig*. Upon this ornament he was extremely tenacious. As naval jests are sometimes a little rough, his brother officers made occasional allusions to this delicate appendage to the doctor's person. One day a young lieutenant, in the course of a facetious discussion, said, "Suppose now, doctor, I should take off your *hat*." "Sir," replied the doctor, "I shall talk no longer with you; you grow *scurrilous*." He would not even admit so near an approach as to the hat which protected it. In like manner, if any body approaches Mr. Bowles's laurels, even in his outside capacity of an *editor*, "they grow *scurrilous*." You say that you are about to prepare an edition of Pope;

you cannot do better for your own credit as a publisher, nor for the redemption of Pope from Mr. Bowles, and of the public taste from rapid degeneracy.

THE END.

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